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Music and Festivity in Tunisia:
The International Festival of the Sahara in Douz and the Negotiation of Identity

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The Open University

Faculty of Arts

Music Department

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Festivals are an important part of public life in Tunisia: most towns, no matter how small, manage to have an annual festival, and in the capital, Tunis, there is at least one festival a month featuring music, theatre, poetry, film, comedy, or dance. Not only are they an important feature of social life, but festival performances also serve as opportunities for Tunisians to articulate their national, political, religious, and ethnic identities. This thesis focuses on one of the oldest and least understood events, the International Festival of the Sahara, and explores the relationship between festivity and expressions of identity in southern Tunisia.

A Brief History of the Douz Festival

The International Festival of the Sahara, the “Douz Festival”, takes place over four consecutive days during late December in Douz, a small town in southern Tunisia. Founded in 1913 as the *Day of the Camel* while Tunisia was still a French colony, the Douz Festival is ostensibly the oldest of the country’s 311 festivals. The early festivals, held before the start of World War I, were intended to bring together camel enthusiasts from among the French officers, residents of Douz, and nomadic groups from the region. It was a one-day event featuring camel races and competitions. Despite the fact that no festivals were held for decades during, between, and after the world wars, the residents consider the early festival to be the same event as the current one. The festival resumed in 1967 with a multi-day format that resembles the current event. Beginning in 1981, per the directive of President Bourguiba (see Chapter 7 for a detailed discussion of his influence on Douz and the festival), the festival adopted an international dimension by inviting participants from other Arab and African countries (Wasallati 2003-04:33). Although the current festival is held in late December, some of my informants claimed that it used to be held in late November in order to correspond to the start of date harvesting season even though it was never considered a

“harvest” festival. The festival was moved to December in order to fall within the Christmas break for Western visitors and to make Douz an attractive holiday destination. However, as I discuss in Chapter 8, Douz’s inadequate tourism infrastructure hinders festival organizers’ efforts to make the festival attractive to a significant number of tourists.

Over the four days of the festival, events include traditional camel races, sand hockey games, demonstrations of sloughis (Moroccan sighthounds) chasing rabbits, performances of the *nakh*, children’s songs and games, and displays of equestrian skills along with poetry contests and lectures on poetry, concerts, demonstrations of traditional Bedouin wedding ceremonies, tours of traditional Bedouin encampments, an artisan exhibit, and a multi-day conference.

Scenes from the Douz Festival

The opening ceremonies begin at 9:00 am on the first day. Hundreds of local residents and tourists gather along a 2-kilometre stretch of the *Avenue 7 Novembre 1987*¹ in the centre of town, ending at the *Place 7 Novembre* roundabout. This is a busy thoroughfare and the beginning of the routes to the other major towns in the south, including Kebili, Tozeur, Gabes, and Gafsa. All vehicular traffic is diverted and everyday business grinds to a halt as spectators gather to watch more than a dozen groups perform simultaneously. There are *zokra* (folk oboe) and drum bands, drum ensembles, folk dancers, rifle dancers, camel and horse drivers, jugglers, and a snake charmer. Performing groups, including folk bands and dance troupes, come from Tunisia, Morocco, Libya, Algeria, and Egypt, as well as from outside the Arab world. The groups slowly promenade up and down a short stretch of pavement, seemingly repeating the same pieces. This revolving showcase continues for about three

¹ Many streets and plazas were named *7 Novembre 1987* to commemorate the date on which former President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali assumed power.

hours and ends after dozens of dignitaries, including members of the Cultural Ministry, local government, and foreign delegates, tour the venue and greet the performers.



Figure 1. Map of Tunisia²

During subsequent mornings, performing groups take turns entertaining onlookers in the *souq*, the central plaza surrounded by cafés and tourist-oriented shops in the heart of Douz. Two of Douz’s major streets intersect in the *souq* and divide it into equal quadrants. During the festival, each quadrant is transformed into a performance space for at least one act, and sometimes two or three simultaneously. The groups rotate through the quadrants, each performing for approximately one hour.

After a long lunch break, daily activities resume at *Place H'nich*, a stadium at the edge of the Sahara Desert located 2 kilometres from the centre of town. The stadium, with seats for several hundred people, has remained unfinished for decades. Situated near the *Zone Touristique* adjacent to most of the town’s hotels, *Place H'nich* also serves as Douz’s gateway to the Sahara. It is the place where camel drivers and tourist groups begin and end

² <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/maps/africa/tunisia>

their treks into the desert. A multitude of onlookers stand nearby, controlled by police officers trying to prevent them from wandering into the paths of the performers.

At *Place H'nich*, all of the performers who participated at the opening ceremonies offer short vignette performances interspersed with narration in French, English and Arabic by a lively announcer. This is followed by performances demonstrating local wedding practices, folk dances, children's games, and traditional dances. The afternoon concludes with demonstrations of traditional hunting techniques, desert games, camel races, camel fights, and displays of horsemanship. The second and third days of afternoon performances at *Place H'nich* usually highlight camel and horse races and equestrian events.

Each evening at 8:30 pm, a concert is held at the *Maison de Culture* near the centre of town. This cultural centre, named in memory of famed local historian and author Mohamed Marzougi, houses a small art gallery and the only auditorium in town. Festival concert audiences consist of hundreds of people from Douz and a very small contingent of tourists. The performance usually features local poets, musicians from Tunis, and occasionally minor Tunisian pop stars. Periodically, the famous local singer Belgecem Bougenna performs at the *Maison de Culture* for the festival. Bougenna is well known throughout Tunisia, both as a performer and a songwriter, singing in a Bedouin-inspired traditional style. His songs, accompanied by *oud*, *shqashiq* (large iron clappers), and *darbouka* (hourglass-shaped drum), include both declamatory and melodic passages that serve to emphasize the structure of the local poetic forms.

During the festival there is an academic conference at the El Mouradi Hotel in Douz's *Zone Touristique*. Topics vary from year to year and focus on Bedouin life, local history and literature, and agriculture. Most of the attendees are local scholars, dignitaries, and residents. In addition to the conference there are poetry readings, a craft fair, a photography exhibit, a

book fair, and a Bedouin-style festival market with vendors selling clothing, housewares and sweets.

Camel races are one of the featured events in the contemporary festival, as are several activities that are also part of local wedding traditions. During the festival, various components of traditional weddings are recreated, including *jeffa* processions (the voyage of the bride to her new home in a decorated *howdah*, an elaborate carriage on a camel), music by *zokra* and drum bands, *nakh* (also called *nakhan*; the “hair dance” performed by young women), and performances by *boussadias*³ (costumed street performers).

I was instantly captivated by the appearance and the dance of the *boussadia*, a masked and costumed street performer who dances and plays *shqashiq* during festivals and weddings in Tunisia. *Boussadias* are traditionally dressed with a fur covered hat adorned with assorted objects, a plain brown mask with fur accents, a fur vest, and numerous fur “tails” attached to a fur belt. The *boussadias* are an important component of the Douz Festival. They make their initial appearance during the opening ceremony and dance at the morning programme’s venue to mark the start of the festival. After the opening ceremonies, and for each of the four mornings of the festival, participants fill the *souq* and perform until noon. During these open-air performances, *boussadias* can be seen dancing independently, with each other, and occasionally with onlookers. Although they come and go during the festivities, their participation is expected by and enthralling to the audience. Outside of the festival, *boussadias* are also sometimes hired to perform at weddings. Their presence at a *rammi* celebration, the second day of the nuptial festivities, is considered to be propitious, as it is believed that the *boussadia* dispel *djinn* (evil spirits, sing. *djinn*). Several informants stated that “true” *boussadias* must be black for only black people can see *djinn*.

³ My informants have explained that in Arabic, there is no plural form of the word *boussadia*. I will use “*boussadias*” to describe two or more *boussadia*. *Boussadia* is also a common surname.

Like the *boussadia*, the festival snake charmers also captivate the audience. My first encounter with snake charmers in Douz was during the 2009 Festival. On the morning of the third day of the festival, the *souq* in the centre of town was filled with a wide variety of performers and spectators. My informant Moez⁴ appeared and recommended that I watch his niece perform. She is a snake charmer from the town of Tatouine in the southern part of the country. A lively crowd had already surrounded the performance space claimed by his niece, Sonia, and her troupe: a *zokra* player, 2 drummers, and a male associate, Hatem. As the band began playing, a lizard was removed from the large ornate chest that was situated next to the musicians. Sonia stroked the lizard, danced around the performance circle, and then placed it on her head. Next, she replaced the lizard in the chest and removed two scorpions. As she brought each scorpion out, she stroked its belly. She gave the scorpions to Hatem, who then put them near her ears. The scorpions were then removed and returned to the chest. Then cobras were brought out one at a time, each one successively larger. As each one was brought out, Sonia would place it on the ground with the tip of its tail under a piece of brick. She worked with each of the snakes using trance-inducing hand movements to control them. Sonia was also tapping the snakes to get them to spread their hoods. As she moved from one to another each snake would become more agitated. Once all four of the snakes were aroused, Hatem laid down very slowly between them. The music accompanying the lizards and scorpions was the same; however a new, faster melody was played once the snakes were introduced.

During the four days of the festival, the town is infused with energy and activity. Local restaurant, hotel, and shop owners and tour guides appreciate the income generated by the modest influx of tourists. More importantly, the festival is also a powerful source of

⁴ Throughout this thesis I have changed the names of my informants in order to protect their privacy. Names of well-known cultural figures have been maintained and they are identified by both given and surnames.

excitement and pride for the people of Douz. After my many trips to the town, I have seen that the festival is not just a showcase for the extraordinary and the exceptional, such as the *boussadia* and the snake charmers. Performances seen at the festival allow for a reframing of everyday life in Douz and a reimagining of what it means to be “of Douz”.

My Encounters with the Festival

Before my first fieldwork visit to Tunisia, at a time when it looked like my research would focus on Tunisian listening practices, a family member was looking at cultural heritage sites for me to visit during my trip. She found the website for the Douz Festival and recommended that I add it to my itinerary. I was intrigued by the website, media coverage, and YouTube videos of the festival and decided to plan a one-week stay in Douz. During this first visit to Douz in December 2008 I was fascinated by the strong sense of ethnic pride in Douz, which was not something I had experienced during my trip to northern Tunisia in 2006. I also noticed the limited number of tourists that attend the festival and residents’ enthusiastic participation in festival events.

During my first visit to Douz, I spoke with as many festival participants and residents as possible and quickly developed a network of informants. This network expanded with every visit to Douz. Sometimes these connections led to unexpected benefits. One of my informant’s nephews was a police officer, and on several occasions he was able to get me through security checkpoints quickly and without questioning because of his rank. In 2010, one informant secured a festival press pass for me so that I could get preferential seating at events. Unfortunately, hundreds of people get some variety of special pass and as a practical matter mine offered no benefits.

I attended the Douz Festival in 2008, 2009, and 2010. I have also visited Douz six times outside of the festival, usually during May and June, and have experienced the rhythm of non-festival Douz. During most of the year, life in Douz is structured by *salat* (obligatory

five-times daily prayer), *adhan* (the call the prayer), and work and family obligations.

However, for four days in late December, these markers are secondary for many residents. A new routine is established around festival events. Even for those residents who do not attend many festival events, their daily patterns are interrupted because everyone else's have adjusted to the rhythm of the festival.

During my visits to Douz and the festival I have switched between roles. Sometimes I have attended events unnoticed amongst dozens of other spectators, watching alongside residents of Douz and tourists. At other times, I have attended events with informants, some of them prominent members of the community, and have been afforded preferential treatment (i.e. better seating and photo opportunities with performers). In both cases, I have experienced the festival as a communal expression of identity and local pride.

Negotiation of Identity at the Douz Festival

Although Douz is not particularly well known within or outside of the country, it has achieved a level of recognition as the home of the International Festival of the Sahara. This is the only Tunisian festival that celebrates the culture of a town, its environs, and its early inhabitants, namely, the semi-nomadic Marazig people. Outwardly, the festival appears to have a fourfold purpose: to educate residents and visitors about local traditions, to preserve Marazig heritage (albeit in 'festivalised' form), to entertain attendees, and to promote tourism. Although it may seem odd for a festival to teach residents about these practices, especially those for weddings, several informants explained that many younger people are not exposed to local customs if their families opt for modern ceremonies.

However, beyond these four purposes I will argue that the most important function of the festival is its ability to serve as a forum for the residents of Douz to negotiate and process their identity as Marazig, or "of Douz". The festival is a public ritual that reflects the symbols, beliefs and values of the citizens of Douz. Through a wide variety of performances, it

provides an opportunity for the residents to reassess their collective identity and conflicting ideas about what it means to be “of Douz”. The demonstration of traditional hunting techniques reflects the Bedouin-like customs of the Marazig in the early twentieth century. Brass band performances recall images of early twentieth-century colonial Tunisia. The dance of the *boussadia* depicts mystical practices or sub-Saharan traditions. Lastly, the instant availability of festival DVDs reminds visitors that Douz is part of the modern world. It is these wide-ranging and sometimes-conflicting representations of Douz that reflect the primary tensions that are negotiated annually through festival performances.

Throughout this thesis I discuss the “negotiation” of identity in Douz. However, people do *not* explicitly argue over what it means to be “of Douz” or how Douz-ness should be reflected in the festival. Negotiation in this sense is neither a debate nor an attempt to reach a compromise about what it means to be “of Douz”; it is an exercise in finding and sharing a common understanding of identity. Additionally, there are neither conversations nor open disagreements over whether elements of identity should be represented in festivity, or if some elements should be highlighted while others are overlooked. By stating that the Douz Festival is a forum for the “negotiation” of identity, I mean that it is a site for the simultaneous expression, affirmation, and management of identities. Etienne Wenger similarly uses the term negotiation to indicate interactions outside of discursive exchanges (Wenger 1998:53). He writes, “the concept of negotiation often denotes reaching an agreement between people ... but it is not limited to that usage ... [and can] convey a flavor of continuous interaction, of gradual achievement, and of give-and-take” (ibid.). From this perspective, I argue that all performances and interactions in Douz during the festival enact a sort of negotiation of identity.

Through conscious programming decisions made by the Festival Committee as well as spontaneous performances during the festival, residents present an image of what, for them,

it means to be “of Douz”. For example, some citizens enjoy wearing Bedouin-style clothes and taking their camel on a ride through town during the festival to perform their Douz-ness to other residents and visitors. This reinforces their self-defined image of Marazig-ness. In contrast, residents would never sing *Burda*—a song extolling the virtues of the Prophet Mohamed—at the festival event although it gets performed at weddings (see Chapter 4). This is because of its connections to Sufism. This distancing from Sufism is an important part of identity in Douz. Overall, the “negotiation” of identity is about framing and highlighting what residents want to believe about themselves, and what they want others to believe about them.

All Things Douz

I use the terms “Marazig”, “of Douz” and “Bedouin” in this thesis to describe the people, practices, and objects associated with Douz. These adjectives convey the nuanced relationships with the town’s history, legacy, and geography and are important to issues of identity.

Most of the residents of the town consider themselves to be descendants of Sidi Marzoug and his “grandsons” Omar al Mahjoub and Hamed el Ghouth. Together, these three are regarded as the founders of Douz and the neighbouring village of Laouina. A detailed history of the town and the founders is presented in Chapter 2. Although no family in Douz that I have met can authoritatively document their ancestry back to Sidi Marzoug, Mahjoub or Ghouth, individuals consider themselves to be Marazig because their parents and grandparents are from Douz. The idea that the family has lived in Douz as long as anyone can remember is ample evidence of Marazig-ness. The label is also used to convey the ideas that the Marazig people of Douz have of themselves. It is an image of a tribe of Arab warriors who are deeply pious and attuned to the natural world. It is also an image of the Marazig as a confederation of nomadic Bedouin clans with their own distinctive stories, poetry, music,

dances, and customs all rooted in a profound connection to the desert. However, most contemporary Marazig lead sedentary lives in Douz, some are religious some are not, and others only leave their homes when absolutely necessary. Despite this, the Marazig image is a powerful one in Douz today. I use the terms “Marazig” or “*Marzougi*” not only as the residents of Douz do, to denote all things related to their ethnic group, but also to convey the idea of the ancestral ideal of Marazig-ness that exists in Douz today.

A very small percentage of the town’s population is not Marazig. One informant suggested that less than 5% of the town’s 27,000 permanent inhabitants are either Western Europeans that have retired or relocated to Douz, immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa, or the children of these immigrants. Few people move to Douz because of high unemployment and stringent laws about buying or leasing property. Most homes and parcels of land are kept within the family and passed down from generation to generation. I use the phrase “of Douz” to include all practices, objects, and people found in the town, Marazig and non-Marazig. My usage is identical to the phrases used in Douz “*min Douz*” (from, or in Douz) or “*Douzi*” (of Douz). The phrase suggests characteristics specific to the town and its people that transcend images of Marazig-ness.

Numerous informants in Douz, Tunis, Kebili, and Tozeur stated that Jewish communities flourished throughout Tunisia for centuries. Several musicians in Tunis suggested that Jewish composers and performers were highly successful and celebrated up until the end of the 1960s. However, my informants claimed that many of the Jewish communities in Tunisia left without explanation. Although they did not know the reason for the exodus, Lyn Julius states that Tunisian Jews left for France in 1966 after riots broke out in Tunis after the Israeli victory in the Six Day War (Julius 2005:57). Undoubtedly, the legacy of Jewish musicians is important to the history of music in Tunisia, but it falls outside the scope of this thesis.

Although the residents are no longer nomadic or even semi-nomadic, the Marazig and non-Marazig residents of Douz often invoke the image of the Bedouin, or more specifically *Sahrawi*—"of the desert and of the Sahara" to describe local objects, practices, and people. One young Marazig informant, Ridha, is a self-taught *gasbiyah* (end-blown metal flute) player. He describes his daily ritual of driving to one of the secluded streets in Douz near the desert to practice. Ridha explained—despite the fact that he wears the newest fashions recently imported from France, drives a late-model Audi, and works in the livery business—that he still identifies with his Marazig roots, and more specifically, being *Sahrawi*. Other informants described the Spring hiking holidays in the desert that many families enjoy. Nasser, a 55-year old primary school teacher, stated that many people from Douz take several weeks each year to wander through the desert to reconnect with their roots and experience the serenity of the desert. I believe the citizens of Douz, mainly the Marazig, have a genuine sense of connection with the desert, but I suggest that there is more at work here. In Chapter 5, I discuss Ali Jihad Racy's (1996) description of the "Bedouin ethos." He suggests that Bedouinism and nomadism are equated throughout the Arab world with the virtues of purity, honour, hospitality, chivalry, and bravery (Racy 1996:405). I suggest that alignment with Bedouin and *Sahrawi* identities in contemporary Douz is a way of describing oneself as pure, honest, and authentic—traits that my informants also equate with "being Marazig"—and one of the ways that both Marazig and the people "of Douz" distinguish themselves from the "Other". The "Other" references any external entity that is unlike the self. Cultural, racial, socio-economic, language, gender, and age differences all can be used to differentiate the self from the Other. Because the concept of the "Other" (see Mead 1962; Levinas 1969; Hegel 1977; Said 1979; Kearney 1984; Evans 1996; Lacan 1997; Pinkard 1994) is critical to the discussion of the negotiation of identity in Douz and at the International Festival of the Sahara, I will examine theories of otherness at greater length later in this chapter.

Methodology

My interest in Tunisian festivals began when I first visited Tunisia in July 2006 for an academic conference at the University of Tunis. During the 10-day trip, I became interested in the Tunisian soundscape—featuring a blend of Middle Eastern, African, indigenous, and Western musics—and soon thereafter decided that I wanted to spend more time understanding the music of the country. During this first visit, I was in the northwestern town of Tabarka during its annual jazz festival. I was struck by the pride and enthusiasm that the residents had for the festival. After enrolling in the PhD programme at the Open University, but before my first official fieldwork visit, information about the Douz Festival was brought to my attention by the family member previously mentioned. After looking at the festival website, I decided to add the festival to my itinerary. During this initial trip, I realized that I wanted to make Douz and the festival the focus of my research.

Since I serve as a full-time music librarian and lecturer, my fieldwork visits were limited to a duration of one month, and had to fall between academic terms. Fortunately, the Douz Festival occurs during the Christmas holidays while the “wedding season” and other festivals throughout Tunisia are in the summer, thus making attendance possible for me. My fieldwork visits included regular trips to Tunisia for one month during May, June or July, as well as one month from the middle of December to the middle of January. These visits took place from December 2008 to June 2014. I attended as many festivals as possible when in the country, including those in Carthage, Tunis, Tabarka, and Hammamet in the north and Tozeur in the south, in order to get as full a picture as possible of the nature of festivity throughout Tunisia.

Throughout my trips to Douz, the Hotel *20 Mars*⁵ was my primary residence, but this small, inexpensive hotel in the centre of town was really just a place to sleep and store my things. Most of my time was spent either at festival sites (during festival season), at informants' homes, or in cafés. There are dozens of cafés in Douz, but the Café Laqwas in the central *souq*, and Café La Rosa and Café Nour, just outside it, were the ones most frequented by my informants. During the afternoons and evenings, I would often be invited over to their houses for meals or have *oud* or *zokra* lessons. Whenever I arranged an interview with one of the town elders or historians, these interviews took place at one of the cafés in or near the *souq*.

Participant observation, direct observation, and interviews were essential to my research strategy. During my fieldwork visits I interviewed musicians, festival audience members, acquaintances, and festival and government officials. I repeatedly visited with town elders and local historians in order to better understand local beliefs and history. Before each interview I clearly introduced myself, explained the nature of my research, and asked for either written or verbal consent for an interview and permission to include the content of the discussion in my thesis. Furthermore, many of my informants have Internet access, and have been willing to accept follow-up questions via email.

Early in my fieldwork visits, it became evident that written release forms were not very practical. One informant, the mayor of Douz, outright refused to sign a consent form but was happy to be interviewed. He said "you can use any information I give you for your research, but it may not be correct. If you want correct answers, ask the Secretary General of the festival." Ironically, the Secretary General, who was happy to complete an interview consent form, repeated the same facts the mayor gave me. Another informant had a unique approach to my interview consent form. He said, "It is not my place to sign a release form or

⁵ Many businesses, streets and plazas are named *20 Mars* (20 March) to commemorate the date of Tunisia's independence from France in 1956.

even give consent verbally. All information comes from *Allah* for everyone to access and use. It is not my place to grant consent to use these gifts from *Allah*.” After this exchange, I simply would thank him for any information he provided, and remind him that relevant portions would be included in my thesis. I have periodically felt compelled during casual conversations with my informants to repeat that I continually collect information, even when the tape recorder is off. All of my informants understood, and I never felt that our discussions changed because of this.

Informants never asked for their comments to remain anonymous or be “off the record”. However, I have changed their names throughout this thesis in order to protect their privacy. I believe that some of the comments made by informants regarding other musicians, politics, and religion could be offensive to others or even affect relationships negatively. Identification could also jeopardize their jobs or social standing. Although most of my informants were pleased with my decision to change their names, some were upset by it. They said they had nothing to hide and wanted to be acknowledged for their contributions to my research. They were satisfied when I explained that all informants were listed by their real names in the “Acknowledgements” section at the beginning of the thesis.

This brings to light an important concern regarding fieldwork, namely the ethical issues regarding consent. Although I believe that my training in research ethics was adequate, my experiences in the field as described above regarding interview consent did not fit the textbook model presented in my training. I had attended several workshops on ethics-related topics during my induction at the Open University, and I had conversations about ethics with my advisors. However, I was unprepared for handling the conflict between my professional obligation to get written consent forms and informants’ reluctance to sign them.

Although academic institutions, ethnomusicologists and anthropologists consider written consent to be the preferred practice, there is literature that acknowledges

circumstances in which written consent to record performances or interviews cannot be obtained and yet it is ethical to proceed (Dwyer 2006:44). Even though very few of my informants signed a consent form, I thoroughly explained what I was researching, why I was doing research, and what my institutional affiliations were. I was confident that they understood my explanation because they asked questions about my education and my project. Personally, I accepted verbal consent as permission to proceed and carefully noted caveats (i.e. “please do not show videos of me to my neighbours” and “please use this for your research only”). I explained to my informants that I had no intention of commercially exploiting them or using the material I was gathering for financial gain. Through conversations with them, I quickly learned that in Tunisian society verbal consent is more meaningful than the written word (ibid.:44). There is ample coverage of the subject of consent in the literature (see du Toit 1980; Thorne 1980; Wax 1980; Wax 1982; Fine 1993; Herrera 1999; Marshall 2006; Jacob 2007), undoubtedly because it is a controversial topic and subject to a researcher’s specific circumstances and the informants’ cultural norms. I suggest that written consent may work for researchers in many contexts, however it should not be considered a universal requirement in order for fieldwork to be considered ethical.

Direct observation of performers and audience members during festival activities and concerts was critical for gaining an understanding of what happens during performances, and how listeners respond. During direct observation, I was able to monitor behaviour without directly engaging with others. Periodically, I would play recordings from direct observation of performances to interviewees in order to solicit comments on a specific performance, performer, or audience reaction. Occasionally, informants would play YouTube and other video clips of festival performances and weddings to make a point (i.e. to demonstrate the prowess of a performer, to show me the context of specific wedding music, to illustrate how a particular rhythm is used for a certain dance, etc.). In so doing, my informants themselves

were both participants and critical observers. As Nettl points out, “it is the insider that provides the perspective that the culture has of itself” (Nettl 2005:153).

During each fieldwork visit I took countless photographs and made videorecordings of weddings, festival events, informal performances by informants, and interviews. At first I was concerned with getting permission from my subjects beforehand, but as mentioned previously, my requests for consent were quickly dismissed. Taking and sharing photos and videos is part of everyday life in Tunisia. I noticed at festival performances and weddings that most attendees take photos and videos with their mobile phones and immediately share them with friends and family using Bluetooth. Several informants suggested that pictures and videos of weddings should be handled respectfully. They explained that since they are rites of passage, they should not be posted online or distributed to others.

Some of my informants were eager to take pictures and make recordings for me. Others would offer to give me photos and videos they had taken previously. Many of the images and recordings they gave me—especially those of weddings and the *boussadia*—were extremely valuable.

All of the photos and videos I took and most of those given to me by my informants as noted above, were extremely valuable to my research. Not only did they allow me to compare performances to determine what was ordinary and what was not, they also permitted me to compare performances from Douz with those from other parts of Tunisia.

Videorecordings of festival performances and my *zokra* lessons formed the basis for the transcriptions of the musical examples provided in this thesis. Some of the photographs and videos that my informants and I took have been posted on my blog:

<<http://alankarass.wordpress.com/>>.

I had hoped to access local archives or documentation centres in order to get a historical perspective on festivals and music making in Tunisia. Unfortunately, there are no

local archives that collect festival-related material and only government officials are allowed to access the national archives. In July 2009, while studying Arabic at the Bourguiba School in Tunis, the school's director tried to arrange a tour of the *Bibliothèque Nationale* for interested students. I had hoped this would facilitate later visits on my own, however, a tour was denied even after numerous requests by the director. Although I was able to visit the Douz Library, the Headquarters of the Douz Historical Society, and the Douz Festival Office, the print resources they had to offer were limited and were items I had already seen via informants or was able to obtain through interlibrary loans.

Most Tunisians are fluent in French and many of my interviews were conducted in a combination of French, Arabic, and English. Unfortunately my Arabic proficiency was well below that of my French. Most of my Arabic study was focused on Modern Standard Arabic, which is used exclusively by the media in Tunisia but not used or spoken by anyone else. The principal spoken language is Tunisian Arabic, which is a blend of Modern Standard Arabic, French, Italian, English and indigenous languages. The added challenge is that each town and region has its own version of Tunisian Arabic. The dialect of the southern towns is more influenced by Shelha, the language of Tunisian Berbers, while the northern ones are more influenced by French and Italian. Although I acquired very basic conversational skills in Tunisian Arabic and seemed to be understood by everyone, I was insecure about conducting interviews in any languages other than French and English. Several of my informants were fluent English speakers, and agreed to help me interview the few informants who only spoke Tunisian Arabic.

Despite some language difficulties, I strove to interview Tunisians from all walks of life. Some of my informants in the South, namely Belgecem, a fifty-eight-year old secondary school headmaster, and Bechir, a fifty-year-old post office service manager, were well educated and considered affluent by local standards. I spent many evenings with the

Gharsallah family in Douz. Mr. and Mrs. Gharsallah and their four children, all in their twenties, taught me a great deal about the meaning of local songs and wedding traditions. They appeared to be “middle class” by local standards, however, based on my observations and my informants’ descriptions, Douz is extremely homogenous socio-economically. A detailed discussion of class and socio-economic status in Douz appears in Chapter 7. Their family compound was spacious and had several sitting rooms and bedrooms, separate prayer rooms for men and women, satellite television, and Internet access. However, they would often apologize when they invited me for dinner for not having enough money to serve meat. Some informants were uneducated and led difficult lives. Salim, a *boussadia* and drummer from Kebili, barely supported his wife and three children working as a freelance gardener and farmhand. They had a small third-floor flat near the centre of town and he rode an aged motorbike that could barely support the two of us. Salim spoke very little French and I was grateful that his teenage daughter, a fluent French speaker, helped with interviews. Other informants were well educated but lived in poverty. Twenty-nine year-old Saif earned a master’s degree in education and passed the primary-school teacher-licensing exam. He had applied for jobs throughout the country, with no success. His clothes were noticeably old and worn, and he spoke openly of his family’s struggles. Saif explained that his parents and his three brothers lived off of his father’s meagre army pension. During my visit to Douz in the spring of 2012, I learned from a mutual friend that Saif had moved to Libya and secured a hospital job in Tripoli. Overall, I am confident that despite my language limitations my pool of informants has included Tunisians from many walks of life.

Although many of my informants were white, some were black or identified themselves as bi-racial. When I first met Adel, a thirty-year-old professor of *oud* at the Tunis Conservatory, he proudly described his heritage as “black Tunisian” and explained that he is the descendant of Sidi Saad, a well-known black Tunisian *marabout* (holy man). Salim, the

boussadia discussed above, explained that he is an authentic *boussadia* because he is black. However, he claimed he did not have any information about his family's origins or history. Two informants, Ziad, a twenty-seven year old studio musician, and Leila, a fifty-eight year old Arabic teacher, described themselves as bi-racial. Both Ziad and Leila suggested that, although they have not experienced work-related discrimination, bi-racial Tunisians are treated differently socially. Ziad stated, "people do not trust us because they do not know if we are black or white ... uncertainty makes people uncomfortable." Leila added that her father was a white Jewish Tunisian, and her mother was a black Tunisian Muslim, and her parents decided to raise her and her brother in a Francophone household respecting both Islam and Judaism. She said that, as a child, she was very confused; she did not know who she was ethnically, religiously, or racially. As an adult, Leila stated, she was grateful for being bi-racial and bi-religious because it has allowed her to keep an open mind about the race, faith, and ethnicity of others.

Although all of my informants in Douz described themselves as devout conservative Sunni Muslims, some redefined what that meant. One informant labelled himself a devout conservative Sunni Muslim even though he drinks alcohol and does not perform *salat* regularly. He explained that religion is a personal affair. Informants in Kebili, Tozeur, and Tunis associated with Sufi and maraboutic communities explained that their affiliations with these communities are secondary to their Muslim faith; they are Muslim first and foremost. In contrast to this, Leila, initially described herself as Sufi; only during a later discussion did she describe her family history and hybrid Muslim-Jewish practices and beliefs. Several informants in Tunis described themselves as agnostics or atheists. Ziad explained that he does not care about religion. He added that religion causes too many problems and conflicts between people, and he feels that it is more important to be a good person than to worry about religious dogma. Again, I am confident that my pool of informants has included

Tunisians from many walks of life including those from different social classes, races, and with varied religious beliefs.

Literature Review: Festivals, Tourism, and Tunisian Music

In this section I discuss selected books, theses, and articles that are critical to the major arguments in this thesis. The most important of these arguments is that the Douz Festival is a venue for expressing what is “of Douz”, what is “Marazig”, and what is the “Other.”

My research on festivity in Douz was informed by the robust literature on festivals, in particular Smith (1975), MacAloon (1984), Falassi (1987), Di Meo (2001), Ali-Knight *et al.* (2011), Gibson and Connell (2011), Giorgi *et al.* (2011), and Stokes (2011). Also invaluable was the literature on tourism, namely writings by Urry (1990), Desmond (1999), MacCannell (1999), Hazbun (2008), and Picard and Di Giovine (2014). Two monographs addressing tourism were especially relevant to my research on the Douz Festival. First, Hellier-Tinoco’s *Embodying Mexico: Tourism, Nationalism & Performance* (2011) explores how festivity can be used to express national identity as well as how postcards are valuable artifacts for examining the intersection of identity, festivity, and tourism. I examined postcards as part of my analysis of Tunisian snake charming practices in Chapter 6. Second, Xie’s *Authenticating Ethnic Tourism* (2011) investigates issues of authenticity in ethnic festivals in China. There are parallels between his work and the representation of Marazig-ness at the Douz Festival. Lastly, my interpretation of the Douz Festival was also informed by the literature exploring the intersection of festivity and tourism, specifically the works of Getz (1991), Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1998) and Picard and Robinson (2006).

Although there is a significant body of literature on festivity and tourism, the most comprehensive literature on, and critique of, the Douz Festival is contained in two student theses. Although their authority might be limited, they are valuable sources of information.

Annabelle Martelli, in her *laurea* thesis *Oltre lo sguardo turistico: le tradizioni dei M'razig e il Festival Internazionale del Sahara di Douz* (*Beyond the Tourist Gaze: The Marazig Traditions and the International Festival of the Sahara of Douz*) (2005-06), explores the relationship between economic, political and social issues and anthropological tourism. She argues that the expansion of the festival and increase in tourism in recent years has created economic and environmental imbalances, and that these imbalances challenge traditional Marazig values. Walla Wasallati's undergraduate thesis *Miharajain as-Asahara Adouali bi Douz bayna al-Muhafadha alla at-Turath wa Folkoratihi* (*The International Festival of the Sahara in Douz and the Conservation and Preservation of Folklore*) (2003-04) addresses musical and poetic traditions in the festival. She concludes that the festival's efforts to preserve Marazig heritage and educate citizens and guests about local history are overshadowed by its efforts to provide entertainment and promote tourism.

Additionally, Vincent Bisson discusses the Douz Festival in his doctoral thesis *Dynamiques comparées de l'urbanisation en milieu tribal (Tunisie et Mauritanie)* (*Compared Dynamics of Urbanization in Tribal Settings: Tunisia and Mauritania*) (2005). He suggests that the festival, as well as Douz's *Museum of the Sahara*, were supported by the Tunisian government in hopes of neutralizing the local political and social peculiarities that the government perceived as obstructing some of their own initiatives. Bisson believes that by "festivalising" and "museum-ifying" local traditions, the government attempted to make the Marazig, and citizens of the south in general, embarrassed spectators of their own peculiar way of life (Bisson 2005:317; Bisson email, 29 March 2011). Other writers have not discussed this theory, and I have not encountered anything in my fieldwork that would substantiate it.

In contrast to Bisson's theory, I suggest that the literature on "otherness" offers better insights into the Douz Festival. The concept of "otherness" is critical to the discussion of

Tunisian music. Both Ruth Davis in her work on *ma'luf* (traditional Arabo-Andalusian music) and Richard Jankowsky in his writings on *stambeli* (spirit possession music) have discussed the nature and parameters of otherness in Tunisia. For Tunisians, these are some of the criteria for otherness: northern or southern; African or Arab; tradition or modernity; and Tunisian or non-Tunisian. Although Tunisians deny that overt racial discrimination exists, the distinction between “black” versus “white” does arise in popular discourse. Issues of otherness appear throughout Tunisian society, and will be discussed in detail in subsequent chapters.

Davis, in her article “The Art/Popular Music Paradigm and the Tunisian *Ma'luf*,” uses the Tunisian musical genre, *ma'luf*, as the focal point of her argument, namely that the “art/popular music dichotomy of Western scholarship” is not meaningful in Tunisia (Davis 1996:315). She says the dichotomy is as inappropriate in Tunisia as it is elsewhere in the Middle East, though for different reasons. In Tunisia the model is not meaningful because of government and media broadcasting policies, and the “aesthetic and social values that have deep-seated roots in Tunisian urban society” (ibid.:315). She states that genre labels in Tunisia are determined “as much by social and institutional criteria and the status of the user as by actual musical substance” (ibid.:315). Davis claims that in Tunisian musical discourse the polarities are understood as: indigenous vs. foreign, Egyptian vs. Tunisian, and *ma'luf* and traditional songs dating from the 1930s to the 1950s (*al-atika*) vs. the ‘new’ songs often heard on *Radio et Télévision Tunisienne* (*al-haditha*) (ibid.:315).

Davis’s discussion of indigenous–foreign and Egyptian–Tunisian polarities in national musical discourse reflects Tunisian concepts of otherness. The Tunisian post-colonial political agenda was so focused on creating a unified nation-state that most manifestations of internal “difference” were suppressed. The Sufi and Berber communities are examples of groups that seemed to have disappeared from view during efforts to create a

modern Tunisia. Post-colonial Tunisians have a broader definition of otherness which is simply everything that does not appear to be overtly Tunisian. Like Davis, I have talked to Tunisians about their classification of music, and indeed, categories are not neatly divided into art music and popular music. Categorization is fluid and is heavily dependent on the perspective of the individual. In current Tunisian musical discourse the Tunisian vs. non-Tunisian division predominates, and anything not written, performed or produced by Tunisians, though accepted, belongs to the “Other.”

Jankowsky, in his article “Black Spirits, White Saints: Music, Spirit Possession, and Sub-Saharan in Tunisia,” discusses otherness and *stambeli* (2006). *Stambeli* is the healing trance music brought to Tunisia by black slaves from sub-Saharan Africa. He demonstrates that *stambeli* is a cultural, spiritual, historical and musical reconciliation of otherness. Jankowsky asserts that *stambeli* provides a way of expressing hybridity and negotiating the dichotomies of the self and other, Tunisian and African, black and white, and modern and archaic (Jankowsky 2006:404). By invoking sub-Saharan, Muslim, and Christian entities, *stambeli* is “a product of, and a commentary on, the historical encounter between sub-Saharan and North Africans” (Jankowsky 2006:373).

The *stambeli* community has used its perceived otherness, and blackness, to its advantage, even as these characteristics are in other ways socially disadvantageous. Jankowsky states “blackness is associated with a sub-Saharan primitiveness that, in turn has both positive and negative connotations” (ibid.:377). Although there is some prejudice against blacks in Tunisia, Jankowsky states that, “many Tunisians also ascribe to black people a mysterious and powerful ability to manipulate the spirit world and to protect against misfortune” (ibid.). There is a resonance here with what Victor Turner describes as the “power of the weak”—a phenomenon in which “secular powerlessness may be compensated for by a sacred power” (Turner 1969:108; Turner 2004:98).

During my visits to Tunisia I have encountered many aspects of the Tunisian discourse on otherness and hybridity. The most striking discussion of otherness was during my conversation in January 2009 with a staff member at the *Centre des Musiques Arabes et Méditerranéennes* (CMAM).⁶ While explaining the government's role in preserving culture, he described the similarities amongst Tunisians: they look the same, speak the same dialect, and follow the same school of Islamic law interpretation. He suggested that the majority of Tunisians are the same, except for the blacks. Although he clearly considered them Tunisian, he also identified them as black immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa. They are a group that has become integrated into Tunisian society, yet neither their geographic nor their cultural roots have been forgotten by either black or white Tunisians. The staff member's differentiation of blacks, while acknowledging their assimilation into Tunisian society, is similar to how Jankowsky describes race in Tunisia in his assessment of *stambeli*. The staff member's unenthusiastic acceptance and marked differentiation of blacks is comparable to the reception and separation of *stambeli* practitioners among Tunisians. Race is a complex issue in Tunisia. Many of my informants stated they believe racism does not exist in contemporary Tunisia and that black Africans are treated as social and political equals. Others acknowledged that there are anti-black sentiments in Tunisia that have been present for generations. Several of my informants, self-identified as white Arabs of North African descent, stated that black Africans are superior to whites because of their inherent spiritual nature. Ultimately, both blackness and its relevance to constructs of identity are important in Tunisia.

Tony Langlois encountered race-related issues during his research in Morocco. In his article "The Gnawa of Oujda: Music at the Margins in Morocco" he describes a black-skinned minority community which is distinguished from its neighbours by their religious-

⁶ CMAM is the central Tunisian music research centre, located just north of Tunis in Sidi Bou Said.

musical practices (1998). He focuses on how the Gnawa of Oujda use their “peripheral social position in the town by specializing in psychotherapeutic musical rituals” (Langlois 1998:135). The rituals are held primarily for the town’s poorer and less educated women (ibid.). He claims that attendance at Gnawa rituals by the women of Oujda simultaneously acknowledges and acts out the “loss of reason and unbridled passion” that society ascribes to them (ibid.:147). Langlois states that the people of Oujda understand that the Gnawa have special powers. The Gnawa emphasize their otherness through public rituals, music, and appearance to maintain an economic and political niche amongst the poor. This otherness also keeps them excluded from other societal roles (ibid.:146). The Gnawa are understood by both the residents of Oujda and the Gnawa themselves as peripheral.

Jankowsky and Langlois’s perspectives on otherness and power are useful in considering the otherness of the Marazig of Douz. In their articles the communities they describe are distinctive because of their music-religious practices, whose practitioners are often dark-skinned and associated with a specific geographic location. In the case of the Marazig, they see themselves as a distinct ethnic group. The residents of Douz have strong sentiments about their ethnic identity, traditions, customs, music and relationship to the town. However, most Tunisians do not know that the Marazig exist. More generally, there is little acknowledgement of ethnic diversity within the country. As the CMAM staff member stated, “we [Tunisians] are all the same.” And as Jankowsky claims in his 2006 article, race and ethnicity are not publicly discussed in Tunisia (Jankowsky 2006:379). The Marazig do not seem to be bothered by the lack of acknowledgement. One Marazig camel driver stated, “The government does not care what we do as long as we do not create any problems.” The question remains, then, as to how the construction of otherness is affected when it is perceived from within rather than by others. It appears that the representation of Marazig identity is a local issue, and it is mainly Tunisians living in the south who express any interest

in the Marazig label. This may, in part, support Bisson's previously mentioned theory that the "festivalising" and "museum-ifying" of local traditions is primarily for the sake of the residents of Douz and makes the Marazig spectators of their own particular way of life (Bisson 2005:317; Bisson email, 29 March 2011).

The Douz Festival and Tourism

A discussion of the Douz Festival is not complete without addressing its relationship to tourism. Stokes states that musical tourism is often concerned with the question of authenticity, namely what is real, what is just a show, and the distinction between reality and representation. He suggests that it is more important to understand how the terms "reality" and "representation" are used discursively rather than "whether or not they have any analytical value" (Stokes 1999:143). This idea is valuable for examining the role of *zokra* bands at the Douz Festival. What do residents say about them? Are the *zokra* bands at the Douz Festival authentic? Are they the same bands that play year-round for weddings, or are they musicians that play occasionally when the Festival Office contacts them? Do they play traditional repertoire, or popular tunes that the audience might recognize?

Based on interviews and casual conversations, performers and residents of Douz consider festival performances to be authentically Marazig. Residents perceive these events to be identical to the performances held for weddings and celebrations during the rest of the year. The music and dance I observed during festival events appeared to be the same as the ones I experienced at the weddings I attended. For the residents of Douz, weddings are opportunities to reinforce community and familial ties (see Chapter 5); this is accomplished at both festival weddings and "rite of passage" weddings. The obvious difference between these is that the Douz Festival is a public and secular demonstration of tradition whereas weddings are familial and religious rites of passage that accomplish an actual transformation of social state. From an outsider's perspective, festival weddings are representations of "rite

of passage” weddings. From my informants’ perspectives it is not that simple: although festival weddings do not have the same legal or religious ramifications, they do have some of the same social functions—to bring the community together and invoke symbols that represent what it means to be Marazig. When I asked my informant Moez about representations of weddings at the Douz Festival he responded, “they are the same as all other weddings; the only thing missing from festival weddings is the signing of the marriage contract.”

All the same, there are some notable differences between festival and “rite of passage” weddings, namely audiences and venues. During the Douz Festival, performances are open to everyone: tourists, residents of Douz, and visitors from surrounding towns. Unlike the festival, weddings are only open to family members and invited members of the community. At the festival, men and women may sit or stand side by side, no matter where they are from or who they are. In contrast, the sexes celebrate in separate spaces (although within the same venue) during weddings; men dance with men and women dance with women. Lastly, festival events are held in public spaces: *Place H’nich*, the *souq*, and the *Place 7 Novembre*. Wedding celebrations, in contrast, are held in outdoor community spaces, *les salles des mariages*.

These differences may be understood through Richard Bauman’s theories on verbal art as performance and framing. Bauman (1984) outlines a performance-centred analysis of verbal art and framing based on the work on Goffman (1974), Bateson (1972), and others. He stresses that the circumstances surrounding a performance are more important than the content of the performance itself (Bauman 1984:8-9). A performance’s frame—namely the details of place, time, and audience—provides the context for the message imbedded in it (ibid.:9-10). Bauman adds that the act of performance itself is a frame—a distinctive form of communication bounded by community-specific protocols (ibid.:10-11).

Based on Goffman's model, Bauman suggests that frames are created and changed through keying, the use of culturally conventionalized information, metacommunication, about how to interpret the content of a performance (ibid.:15-16). For example, in English-speaking communities the use of the phrase "once upon a time" at the beginning of a fairy tale serves as a key to the performance for the audience (ibid.:21). This "special formula," as Bauman describes it, provides a key for understanding the nature of the performance (ibid.:21). He explains, "the essential task in the ethnography of performance is to determine the culture-specific constellations of communicative means that serve to key performance in particular communities" (ibid.:22).

As described by Bauman, the frame for festive representations of weddings at the Douz Festival includes the parameters of time (four days in late December), location (*Place H'nich* and the *Place 7 Novembre*), and audience (general public with mixed-gender interaction). Real weddings are framed by the same parameters in different ways. They are held anytime during the year except during Ramadan, they take place at *les salles des mariages*, and the attendees consist of invited guests who socialize by gender. Based on Bauman's model, the narration of representation of wedding ceremonies at *Place H'nich* during the festival can be understood as a "special formula" that keys the frame as festival entertainment and distinguishes it from weddings that are ceremonial rites of passage.

Festivity, Cultural Heritage, and the Government

The discussion of festivity and cultural heritage is particularly relevant to the subject of the Douz Festival. The aforementioned staff member at CMAM (an official government employee) was quite adamant that the government must be responsible for a nation's cultural heritage. He claimed that in Tunisia, there is no other protocol for preserving culture. He stated that although someone has probably documented southern Tunisian culture already, CMAM had no information on, or recordings of, the Douz Festival or Marazig musical

traditions. In the case of the Douz Festival it is evident that the nation-state does not have a great deal of control over the particulars of its socio-cultural image, or how it is imagined. Additionally, festival officials have stated that although the government provides financial support to the festival, it does not have any influence over thematic or programmatic content. This contradicts the opinion of the CMAM staff member. The role of government in Tunisia's festivals will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

Theoretical Framework

One of the major theoretical positions I will explore throughout this thesis is that the Douz Festival is an annual civic ritual that serves as a forum for the negotiation of Marazig identity. Timothy Cooley (2005) makes a number of compelling arguments about contemporary folklore festivals in Podhale, Poland that can be extended to the Douz festival. Most important to my thesis are his arguments regarding festivals and ritual.

According to Cooley, folklore festivals are rituals in the sense that "a ritual is a stylized symbolic representation of objects, beliefs, or truths of special significance to a group" (Cooley 2005:133). During the Douz Festival, the clothing, music, dance, hunting techniques, games, horsemanship displays and camel races—all that represents the Marazig components of what it means to be "of Douz"—are stylized and presented within a festival frame. These objects and activities are placed within the construct of an annual civic ritual for the residents of Douz and international visitors alike. Not only are the symbols of Marazig-ness central to the festival, but the enthusiastic reception of the international performers participating in it is an indication of the cosmopolitanism of the residents of Douz. These international performers are a vital part of the civic ritual aspect of the festival because the "openness to world" aspect of cosmopolitanism is important to the identity of the residents of Douz.

Cooley states that folk festivals, like rituals, are important to communities because they are transformative in some way (ibid.:133). Through the festival, the Marazig's relationship to visitors and other Tunisians is transformed. The citizens of Douz are no longer solely residents of the town of Douz; they become the object of the visitor's gaze (see Urry 1990 and MacCannell 1999) and a symbol of Douz's Bedouin heritage. Even for residents who are not on stage or audience members, all citizens of Douz become part of the festival experience for domestic and international visitors. During the four days of the festival, the town of Douz is transformed; the *souq* and the *Place 7 Novembre* are no longer busy thoroughfares and convenient places to socialize or conduct business: they become stages. In fact, the entire town becomes the stage for a show that depicts the beliefs that the Marazig have about who they are, who their ancestors were, and how being Marazig fits into modern Tunisia.

As I will demonstrate in Chapter 5, although life-cycle rituals such as weddings are re-enacted at festivals, the transformative power of these rituals are not part of these festival performances (ibid.:133-134). It is the highlighting of quintessential Marazig wedding practices—performances by *zokra* bands, the *nakhan*, the *jeffa* processional, the *boussadia*, and the snake charmer—that affirm their importance to identity in Douz. Festive performances of wedding practices are “public statements of ideas and beliefs about heritage” (ibid.:146). They emphasize aspects of life in Douz, especially the connection to Bedouin practices. As Cooley states, just as actual weddings enact and reference history, so do festival representations of weddings (ibid.:146). In Chapter 2, I discuss the importance of oral and written histories to the ideas that the citizens of Douz have about themselves. The re-enactments of life-cycle rituals at the festival are performances of the same ideas. Lastly, the centrality of nuptial practices to the festival also affirms the high social value placed on weddings. As I explain in Chapter 5, weddings are the only community-centred life-cycle

rituals practiced in Douz and they are important opportunities for individuals to reinforce family and community relationships.

Most importantly, just as Cooley describes festivals in the Tatra Mountains, the Douz Festival is a place where “groups can ritually legitimate and fix identities” (ibid.:134). The Douz Festival is an opportunity for the residents of Douz to perform aspects of their heritage and life-cycle rituals in order to clearly define what it means to be “of Douz.” Performances by international artists at the festival allow the residents of Douz and visitors from around the world to see what is “of Douz” and what is not. As Cooley suggests, festivals can ritually enact ideas about localism and globalism (ibid.:139). In Douz, the local is clearly defined by the Bedouin heritage of its residents. The response to globalism in Douz, as I will explore in Chapter 7, is a sense of cosmopolitanism that embraces openness to cultural practices of the world while remaining steadfast in an allegiance to Bedouin heritage and conservative Sunni Islam.

Not only does the Douz Festival serve as the principal venue for residents to fix identities, it is also the opportunity for them to express what it means to be “of Douz”. Paul Bramadat (2001) claims, “identity emerges out of dialogue, and ... such dialogue is evident in cultural spectacles. For members of ethnic minorities, an ethnic cultural spectacle may represent a symbolic site in which they articulate a particular account (or “story”) of themselves ...” (Bramadat 2001:83). He adds that “these festivals are thus sites of contestation in which individuals and groups shape or, more to the point, reshape the ways others perceive them by effectively (if temporarily) seizing control of the arena of cultural representation” (ibid.:84). This, I argue, is precisely what occurs at the Douz Festival; however, as I described on page 9, the negotiation here is not always explicit or verbal.

Discussions with the residents of Douz suggest that being “of Douz” can involve many identities: being Marazig, Arab, Muslim, North African, African, and for some, black. I

will discuss the idea of being “of Douz” below. Many residents see themselves as part of the Western world, given Tunisia’s strong economic and political ties to Europe and North America. Others have a personal affinity to Turkey, citing cultural similarities stemming from the fact that the country was part of the Ottoman Empire from 1574 to 1704. These residents state that many local cultural practices, such as music, dance, dress, and public ceremonies, are rooted in Ottoman ones.

During the Douz Festival, it is possible to witness Marazig, North African, African, and Arab practices performed as the residents of Douz use the festival stage to negotiate and enact their identity. For example, at the opening ceremonies, some of the men of Douz travel through the centre of town wearing traditional white tunics and trousers, stating that this is how their Marazig ancestors would have done it. After the camels leave, *boussadias* can be found dancing in the *souq*; residents insist that the *boussadia* is a link to cultural practices of West Africa. In the same venue, a teenage dance troupe from Douz affirms their connection to the modern Arab world by dancing to the latest hits from MTV Arabia. While they dance, they are being drowned out by several *zokra* bands, which citizens associate with the Ottoman Empire. In *Place H’nich*, the festival’s artistic director included a portable shrine as part of a procession during the opening ceremonies to celebrate the rich North African Sufi heritage. As Bramadat suggests, these performances of divergent elements serve as the dialog about identity between members of the community.

My thesis will also draw upon Goffman’s theory of “front” and “back” regions in performance contexts, as well as Cooley’s exploration of it in relation to Górale festivity. Goffman describes “front region” performances as those done for an audience in which some features are concealed while others are emphasized. He states that this “may be seen as an effort to give the appearance that [the performer’s] activity in the region maintains and embodies certain standards” (Goffman 1959:107). The “back region” is a place “where the

impression fostered by the performance is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course” (ibid.:112) because it is here that the performer steps out of character. Similarly “ceremonial equipment” can be treated in a less reverent way outside of the audience’s view (ibid.). As Cooley points out, “this raises interesting issues, however, when the front region performances involve the presentation of cultural practices considered to be representative of the ethnicity of the very individuals doing the presentation” (Cooley:126). These individuals—and the local musicians, dancers, and camel drivers at the Douz Festival—are performing a myth about themselves (Cooley 2005:126). They are articulating some aspects of their quotidian lives, namely those qualities that exemplify their Bedouin heritage, and presenting them as if that were their sole identities. Of course, the daily routines of the residents of Douz involve many activities, some traditional and some modern (I discuss these terms below). These include tending to camels and horses, listening to *zokra* music, as well as working in *palmeries* (palm groves), offices, schools, and factories.

There are both obvious and subtle manifestations of front region and back region activities at the Douz Festival. Since most of the performances are outdoors, there are no places for performers to engage in back region activities out of view of the audience. Spectators at the festival often watch *zokra* and drum bands playing traditional music in Bedouin clothes in the *souq*. The clothing, setting, instruments, and music are part of the front region and project an image of “traditional Douz”. As soon as the performance is done, the same performers step “off stage” and might be seen using their mobile phones, driving away on their motorbikes, or exposing modern clothing underneath the Bedouin ones. Residents and festival performers alike openly acknowledge the presence of front and back regions. They understand that the front region and being “on stage” is a technique of representation. It is a way for performers to frame by location the aspects of their identity that they want the audience to pay attention to.

Traditional Practices, Modern Practices, and the Ongoing Modern Tradition

Throughout this thesis, I discuss traditional, modern, and traditional modern practices. I offer some background on the use and meaning of these terms. According to Thomas Allen (1997):

Tradition is understood as a set of preexisting values and materials particular to a genre, which have been passed from one generation to the next. In the performance of a traditional genre, these preexisting values are of greater importance than the performers' individual tastes, and judgment of the relative success or failure of the performance is based on these constructs. As folklorist Jan Brunvand asserts, there is a relative fixity of form that causes these art forms to be regarded as traditional (Allen 1997:800).

For my description of cultural life in Douz, I will consider any music, dance, ritual, or practice to be traditional if it satisfies Allen's definition. The *boussadia*, the masked and costumed street performer, is an ideal example. My informant Mehdi in Tunis is an active *boussadia*, performing for weddings and festivals. He explained that he learned about the history, purpose, and dance of the *boussadia* from his father, uncles, and grandfathers. During a fieldwork visit in the Spring of 2010, Mehdi demonstrated the precise steps that a *boussadia* should dance, and the rhythms that should be played on the *shqashiq* as he dances. He added that the song the *boussadia* has always danced to is "Sidi Mansour", a folk melody that is part of the *stambeli* repertoire and was transformed into a pop hit in Tunisia by Saber el-Robai in 2000. Mehdi and other informants explained that even though individual *boussadias* will do what they want for entertainment's sake, audiences have very fixed expectations about the dance, *shqashiq* rhythms, and music of the *boussadia*. The consistency of form, history, and audience expectation exemplifies Allen's definition. In fact, most of what I describe as "traditional" has demonstrable links to the era when nomadism was still practised in the region around Douz.

The definition of modern practices and modernity in general poses greater challenges. For the purpose of this thesis I will describe a practice as "modern" if it does not meet the

criteria for being traditional and if my informants claim that it first appeared sometime during the twentieth or twenty-first century. This includes practices that began during the era of the French Protectorate and when nomadism had been substantially scaled back. The Douz Festival falls into this category. The presence of a DJ and dancing at an *araasa* qualify as modern practices. An *araasa* is part of the wedding celebration and is a small party, with music and dancing, held in the morning for the groom and his friends. An *araasa* can be held during any and every morning of a traditional wedding celebration (which usually happens over three or four days). Most often, it is held in the morning before the signing of the wedding contract, which happens later in the day at the town hall. Male friends greet the groom, dance, and leave money in a plate to help cover the expenses.

Araasa itself falls into a hybrid category that I describe as an ongoing modern tradition. It is a tradition that remains in practice today albeit with variations from its original form. In Douz, traditions that fall into this category include those originating in the Protectorate Era and the pre-Protectorate era when the Marazig were still nomadic. My informants Belgecem and Saif explained that in their parents' and grandparents' generations, the purpose of *araasa* was to get the groom out of the house before the wedding. At the family home, many women would have gathered to get ready for the wedding and prepare food. Belgecem stated that by getting the groom out of the house it prevented inappropriate contact with women before the wedding, which could bring shame to his family. Saif stated that in the past *araasa* often included dangerous games of risk, physical strength, and masculinity (horseplay). The *araasa* in Douz today serves the same function, however the young men in Douz today have abandoned horseplay and substituted pop music and dancing.

Undoubtedly, the descriptions I have laid out here are basic and do not address the infinite subtleties that could exist. For example, the signing of a marriage contract at the start of the wedding celebration has its roots in Islamic practice that residents cite as being

centuries old. Although the origins of the ceremony are ancient, the modern version that takes place in Douz's town hall with cake and photos taken on mobile phones has little semblance to the original practice.

A discussion of practices in Douz would not be complete without mentioning the literature on the origins of traditions and invented traditions (see Anderson 1983 and Hobsbawm 1983). From an ethnomusicological perspective, Christopher Waterman (1990) discusses the production of cultural identity among the Yoruba of southwestern Nigeria. He explains that the term "Yoruba" was not used to describe the peoples of southwestern Nigeria, the Benin Republic, and Togo known today as "the Yoruba" until the early nineteenth century (Waterman 1990:369). The term was first used by European missionary linguists working in Sierra Leone (ibid.). Waterman's argument is that the notion of a single Yoruba culture is an invented one (see Anderson 1983) and that neo-traditional popular music is important to the performance and dissemination of a hegemonic Yoruba identity (ibid.:372).

Unlike the case of the Yoruba, there does not appear to be evidence suggesting that the Marazig identity was an invention of nineteenth-century French colonizers or the Arab settlers before them. However, in a similar fashion to the Yoruba, I do believe that the cultural practices in Douz, at weddings and the Douz Festival, are used to enact and promote Marazig identity. Not only do performances by *zokra* bands, the *boussadia*, and re-enactments of weddings depict what it means to be "of Douz", it promulgates the ideas about what it means to be "of Douz."

The "Other"

Central to sociological and anthropological discussion of identity is the concept of the "Other." George Mead (1962) explained that our relationships with other people and self-reflection on ongoing social exchanges with them allow us to formulate our social identities. Our identities are based on "agreement, disagreement, and negotiation with other people"

(Zevallos, "Otherness Resources"). The Other refers to any singular or collective external entity that is unlike the self. Differences of any type—cultural, racial, socio-economic, language, gender, age—can be used to delineate the self from the Other. Many writers cite Hegel's Master-Slave Dialectic in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Hegel 1977; Pinkard 1994: 53-63) as an important early discussion of otherness. Hegel argued that consciousness is a social process, and "a person must receive acknowledgment of their consciousness from another person in order for that consciousness to exist" (ibid.). It is Jacques Lacan who introduces the "Other" (capital O) to represent radical alterity.⁷ This Other encompasses both the idea of a truly discrete, external Other as well as an imagined, symbolic Other (Evans 1996:133). For Lacan, this alterity is rooted in infancy when we are defining ourselves as separate entities that are distinctly different from our mothers (Lacan 1997:1-7). Emmanuel Levinas suggested that the self cannot understand itself as self without the Other. He claims, "I am defined as a subjectivity, as a singular person, as an 'I', precisely because I am exposed to the other. It is my inescapable and incontrovertible answerability to the other that make me an individual 'I'" (Kearney 1984:62). As an extension of Levinas's philosophy, Edward Said suggests that we understand the Other as a similar or dissimilar extension of the self. Said frames the Orient as the Europe's dissimilar Other (Said 1979:1) and suggests that the West understands the East only through generalized, preconceived notions of society that are in opposition to Western ideals. Each of these paradigms for describing the Other uses the concept to explain a mechanism by which an individual or group describes what it is, and what it is not.

⁷ Throughout this thesis I will be representing this concept using the capitalized form of the word; however, I am not using it in the Lacanian sense.

Otherness in Douz

Although discussions of alterity in Douz occur in regular informal discourse, during fieldwork interviews it became clear that the festival serves as an annual public performance of other-ness, same-ness, and cosmopolitanism in Douz. I will return to this idea throughout this thesis. Through casual discourse, my informants suggested that there are different degrees of otherness; I outline these here with definitions in quotes that I have devised based on conversations with informants, as I describe these different degrees ranging from the most proximate to the most distant.

Despite the fact that the residents of Douz and the adjacent towns of Laouina and Ghlissia all consider themselves descendants of Sidi Marzoug, the citizens of Ghlissia consider themselves to be more authentically Marazig on account of lineage and lifestyle. Ghlissia, 12 kilometres from Douz, is less developed than Douz and is surrounded by desert and desert shrub land. The residents of Douz and Laouina consider the citizens of Ghlissia kin and neighbours, but different, because of the rusticity of their lifestyle. The perceived sense of difference is subtle and, for the sake of my argument, is not a factor in the expression of identity in Douz.

There is a small black population in Douz; my informants have suggested that less than 3% percent of the town's citizens are sub-Saharan African or descendants of them. I discuss the sub-Saharan identity in Douz as it is represented in the festival in Chapter 6. Although the black citizens of Douz are not considered Marazig because they are not descendants of Sidi Marzoug, the residents understand them to be "of Douz": they constitute what I will call a "neighbourly Other." In Douz, blacks and whites work together, pray together, socialize together, and intermarry. Local residents state that there is almost no racism in Douz; my observations support their claims. Truly, the only difference between

black and white residents of Douz is the claim of lineage to Sidi Marzoug and the “Marazig” label.

The residents of the nearby towns of Kebili (30 kilometres to the north), Tozeur (120 kilometres to the northwest), and Matmata (105 kilometres to the east) constitute what I label as the “proximate Other” (see Figure 1. Map of Tunisia, page 3). The citizens of Douz mention that people in these town speak a similar dialect of Tunisian Arabic and have a similar lifestyle, however they are not descendants of Sidi Marzoug and unlike Douz, the residents in these towns generally accept the local Sufi and maraboutic brotherhoods (a description of them appears in Chapter 2). Kebili and Tozeur both have active mystical communities. The residents of Douz tend to regard the mystical communities in these towns—and all members of Sufi brotherhoods—as what I label “distant Others” because, as I demonstrate throughout this thesis, the residents of Douz reject Sufism as part of their heritage.

In general, Tunisians from other parts of the country are considered what I describe as “national Others”. They share a government and a national history, however local histories and dialects vary greatly. The residents of Douz generally believe that the residents in the capital Tunis are more European than Tunisian. They state that they have forgotten true Islam by ignoring the *adhan* (call to prayer) and allowing university-age women to live outside the home. I was surprised to hear that the residents of Douz also consider Algerians to be what I describe as “proximate Others.” Many residents feel more closely aligned with them as “proximate Others” despite their nationality because of recognized cultural and linguistic similarities. They state that, like the Marazig, they are descendants of the Banu Sulaym and Banu Hilal Arab tribes, speak a similar form of Arabic, and share musical styles. The citizens of Douz consider Libyans what I label as “very proximate Others”. During the 2012 crisis in Libya, many residents of Douz offered unoccupied houses and rooms to displaced Libyan

refugees who had found their way there. Further afield are what I describe as “North African and Arab Others”. These are residents of Morocco, Egypt, and other Middle East countries. My informants explained that their histories, customs, and interpretations of Islam mark them as different.

The residents of Douz are very familiar with European and North American cultures and lifestyles—what I will call “familiar Others”—because of tourism and mass media. Many of my informants actively follow French and Italian media and fashion as well as American music, film, and politics. Several of my informants have asked about the differences between Canadian and American culture because they have considered applying for green cards in both countries.

In Douz, all other Others—what I label as the “exotic Other”—are rarely acknowledged. My informants appeared to have no knowledge of Asian, South American or Australasian nations, geography, or cultures. Japanese Taiko drummers made a guest appearance at the 2008 Douz Festival and were enthusiastically received by the audience because they were invited guests. However, audience members from Douz neither understood what they were playing nor what Taiko drumming was. Some informants did not know where Japan is.

All of these are important in Douz, especially at the International Festival of the Sahara. As I will demonstrate in Chapter 7, the residents of Douz and the festival rely on the otherness of performers and visitors to frame what is Marazig and what is not Marazig, both for the residents of Douz and tourists.

Structure of This Thesis

This thesis comprises eight chapters that explore the history and musical practices of Southern Tunisia, the Douz Festival, and the role of the festival in Douz’s cultural life. Chapter Two will include a brief ethnography of the Marazig people, a discussion of their

history and the history of Douz, and the connection to the construction of identity. The following chapter will discuss civic, secular, and art-centred forms of festivity in Tunisia, and how the International Festival of the Sahara fits into the musical landscape. Chapter Four will focus on sacred, ritual, and hybrid forms of festivity and their connections to performances at the Douz Festival. Based on observation and participant-observation, Chapter Five will describe how local musical traditions performed at weddings in Douz are integrated into the festival. I will also discuss why weddings are important to social life in Douz. The following chapter will explore how figures from Tunisian folk life, specifically the *boussadia* and the snake charmer, are important to weddings and the festival. I will explore the history and myths behind these figures, and the significance of their presence at the festival. Chapter Seven will investigate the proximate, distant, familiar, and national Others on stage. Each year, musicians from other countries are invited to participate in the festival. In recent history this has included ensembles from Egypt, Morocco, Algeria and Japan. This chapter will explore how the nature of the festival is influenced by their participation, and the significance of other cultures participating in a Saharan festival. Most importantly, their involvement in the festival and the enthusiasm for their performances is part of cosmopolitanism in Douz. This openness to other cultures is an important facet of identity amongst the residents of Douz. The concluding chapter will summarize the main arguments of my thesis and explain the festival's function within Douz's musical and social landscapes. I will also discuss the role of the 2011 Tunisian revolution in music making in Douz.

Throughout my visits to Tunisia, it has become apparent that festivals encapsulate everyday life in microcosm. Festival performances highlight the joys and challenges of Tunisian life, valued cultural practices, and the Tunisian perspective on their place within the world. But most importantly, they help to identify and define a particular culture, not only for the spectators, but for the performers as well.

Chapter 2: Douz and the Marazig

Contemporary Douz is steeped in tales and traditions. Most residents of the town, the ethnic group known as the Marazig, are happy to share stories about their namesake Sidi Marzoug and his “grandsons”, Omar al Mahjoub and Hamed al Ghouth. The latter are credited with establishing Douz and the nearby town of Laouina. A challenge lies in negotiating the numerous variants of the residents’ stories in order to present an accurate history, particularly given the limited scholarly literature on the region. Residents’ stories about local history pose additional challenges because they reflect desires to align personal narratives with various facets of Bedouin, Berber, Arab, and Muslim heritage. Individuals accentuate some of these facets and minimize others in order to project what they want others to see as their identity. In particular, the stories depict the Marazig both as descendants of holy men and of Arab tribes from Hijaz (the region in the west of present-day Saudi Arabia) and Yemen. This phenomenon is not unique to Douz and has been documented elsewhere in the *Nefzaoua* (the southern region of Tunisia), namely by Jocelyn Dakhliia in her study of historiography in the town of Nefta (see Dakhliia 1993).

This chapter presents a composite history of Douz and the Marazig, reflecting both written and verbal accounts. I have taken into account the roles the stories of Douz and the Marazig play even when their accounts are not possible or plausible. The description of the Phoenicians and Romans presented here is based on historical accounts in the literature; the oral histories that I use begin with the Arab conquests. The history I present is based on what my informants have suggested is important. I discuss the history of the Romans and the Arab conquests but not the events from 670 to 1700 AD, because my informants have stated that the Romans and the early Arab settlers play a bigger role in the development of the region.

It is important to explore these histories, for they constitute the foundations of the recurring themes of the Douz Festival, namely, the images of the Marazig as fearless warriors

and military heroes, as Bedouins with a profound connection to the desert, and as faithful servants of *Allah*. These are the stories the residents of Douz tell and perform about themselves. I suggest that the wide array of performances at the Douz Festival allows the residents to take account of what it means to be “of Douz” in the twenty-first century. In Chapter 7, I will describe how the festival demonstrates another aspect of identity in Douz: that its citizens are cosmopolitan citizens of the world and cultural omnivores, sincerely interested in cultural practices from around the world. At the same time, the core of the festival focuses on images of the Marazig that appear in the histories and in my informants’ accounts. The history of the Marazig and Douz are presented in this chapter in order to understand the principal images that are on display at the festival. Lastly, this account would be incomplete without exploring the impact of the French Protectorate on Douz and the Marazig, and how the Franco-Tunisian relationship is represented during the festival.

Performing History in Douz

Before exploring the history of Douz and the Marazig, it is important to understand how the Bedouin image is performed at the festival and throughout the year. The accounts of the town and its founders are not just told in stories but symbolically represented through dance and music as well.

During the 2010 opening ceremonies of the Douz Festival on the *Avenue 7 Novembre*, a folkloric dance troupe from Douz consisting of ten men dressed in traditional Bedouin clothing formed a circle and performed the *raqs mayazy*, the warrior’s rifle dance. Two drummers, also in traditional dress, stood behind them. Each dancer held a mock rifle fashioned out of wood that was held approximately 10 centimetres from their bodies and was rhythmically twirled in time with the music. At the same time, the dance’s footwork consisted of hopping on the left foot and kicking with the right, in alternation, and lunges at the end of every four-measure phrase. My informant Skander, a twenty-five year old

keyboard player and professional wedding musician, explained that *raqs mayazy* is typically danced to a rhythm in 6/8 meter called *zigayli*:

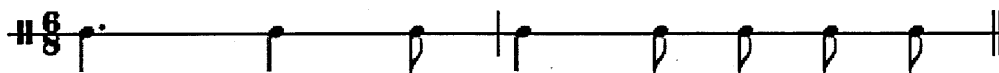


Figure 2. *Zigayli* rhythmic pattern

He added that a number of folk songs and dances use this rhythm. As my informant Belgecem pointed out, the image of the warrior is an important one at the festival. Both Skander and Belgecem stated that the only dance performed at the festival that is unique to Douz is *raqs mayazy*, and the only rhythm that is used for folk dance and music that is uniquely “of Douz” is *zigayli*.

Most young boys in Douz know the dance; many of my informants suggested that it is the quintessential symbol of Bedouin masculinity and bravery. Belgecem added that legend has it that Bedouin warriors would perform the dance to demonstrate their physical prowess and readiness for battle. One day while visiting my informant Moez, I asked about the dance. Instantly, he pulled out a plastic bucket from the garden and started drumming the *zigayli* pattern. Within seconds, his five year-old son ran in from the kitchen to offer his rendition of *raqs mayazy* that was, from my perspective, just like the festival performance.

The dance appears in other contexts as well. During *araasa*, a small social event held for the groom and his friends in the morning before a wedding celebration, there are refreshments, a DJ, and dancing (a description of *araasa* appears in Chapters 1 and 4). An informant invited me to an *araasa* in January 2012. Although much of the dancing is done freestyle, occasionally some of the guests will briefly transition into *raqs mayazy*. Since *araasa* is, in part, a pre-nuptial celebration of manliness, it is no surprise that some guests would take the opportunity to perform their masculinity through this dance.

Raqs mayazy, and by association *zigayli*, are performative representations of the noble Bedouin warrior image that is told in the stories about Douz. Even the discourse about the

dance, including references to physical strength and courage, reinforces this image. The histories about Douz and the Marazig that follow provide a basic framework for understanding the story that is being told at the Douz Festival.

A Basic Chronology of Douz

In this chronology I explore aspects of the history of Douz that my informants said were important, and where possible I have checked local accounts against published histories. Despite the fact that much of Douz's history is based on oral history, historians and archaeologists have established some dates with confidence. Abun-Nasr states that North Africa's indigenous population, the Berbers, "emerged as a result of the admixture of an eastern people, the Libou, who migrated into the Maghrib during the third or the second millennium BC, with its prehistoric inhabitants" (Abun-Nasr 1971:7). Centuries later, there is well-documented evidence of Phoenician and Roman settlements in northern Tunisia as early as 814 BC (Perkins 1986:15). Proof of Roman occupation in the south becomes clear much later. Mosaics found in the town of Thysdrus, the modern town of El Djem (345 kilometres north of Douz), date from the second or early third century AD (Blanchard-Lemée 1996:24; Huskinson 2000:3). A recent geographical and archaeological project uncovered a Roman coin in a Roman dwelling near Djebel Sidi Bou Hellas, 75 kilometres north of Douz; radiocarbon dating of the organic matter suggests the site was occupied around 324-345 AD (Drake 1997:641). Historians and the residents of Douz concur that Uqba ibn Nafi's military campaign through North Africa and his establishment of the town of Kairouan (325 kilometres north of Douz) in 670 AD marks the arrival of Islam and Arab rule in southern Tunisia, thirty-eight years after the death of the Prophet Muhammad (Perkins 1986:27). In the subsequent centuries, five dynasties, or sequences of rulers from the same family, would control Tunisia: the Aghlabids, 800-909 AD, Zirids, 973-1148 AD, Hafsids, 1229-1574 AD, the Muradids, 1613-1705 AD, and the Husaynids, 1705-1957 AD (see Perkins 1986 and

2014). Since these dynasties, as well as the numerous military campaigns that shaped southern Tunisia over the next 1,100 years, fall outside the scope of this thesis, I fast forward to modern Tunisia.

The last of the dynasties, the Husaynids, ruled Tunisia from 1705 until the founding of the Republic of Tunisia in 1956. The dynasty was named after its first *bey* (governor) Husayn ibn Ali (1669-1740), who had pledged allegiance to the Ottoman Empire. Husayn claimed the title after organizing the resistance to the Algerian invasion of Tunisia (Perkins 1986:61). The Ottoman sultan legally recognized Husayn as the governor of Tunisia and issued a law of succession guaranteeing the survival of his line (*ibid.*). After years of the Husaynid's unsuccessful trade and fiscal policies, France intervened and declared Tunisia a Protectorate in 1882 in order to rescue its failed economy (Abun-Nasr 1971:269). Although the Husaynid *beys* remained as head of state, the French ran the government. Both the Protectorate and Husaynid Eras came to a close upon the establishment of the independent Republic of Tunisia in 1956. Political and economic conditions remained relatively stable during the presidencies of Habib Bourguiba from 1957 to 1987 and Zine El Abidine Ben Ali from 1987 to 2011. As I will discuss in Chapter 8, the "Jasmine Revolution" of 2011, which culminated in the removal of Ben Ali from power, has significantly changed Tunisia politically, socially, and culturally.

In terms of the connection between Douz and Tunisia, I suggest that the Marazig began perceiving themselves as Tunisian when French officers arrived in Douz after 1882. One of my informants interested in local history suggested that the Marazig understood the French occupation was inclusive of all the territory known as Tunisia in the nineteenth century. He added that, because the Marazig realized they were part of a larger political, military, and nation-building plan, they felt like they were part of the new, emerging Tunisia. As my informants and Wasallati explain, many French officers were stationed in Douz at the

turn of the century and were assigned the task of establishing wells, schools, and medical facilities. Since the Marazig were being introduced to the same social and political “modernization” as the rest of the country, it is likely that they began to understand their connection to the rest of the nation and see themselves as Tunisian. The residents of Douz were fully engaged in the events leading up to and during the 2011 revolution. In January 2011 there were riots in the streets of Douz, and even a murder, as part of the events leading up to the revolution.

Histories of Douz

When asked about the history of the town and its people, the residents of Douz frequently refer to the writings of Mohamed Marzougi. Marzougi (1916-1981) was a noted local historian and author, and the foremost chronicler of the Marazig. While his writings are not necessarily academic in nature, the residents consider these to be the definitive histories of the Marazig people and Douz. They often make assertions without explanation or substantiation, dates are often inconsistent, and the accounts are sometimes contradictory. Marzougi’s writings are perfect examples of the historiographical problems described by Jocelyne Dakhlia in her 1993 article “Collective Memory and the Story of History: Lineage and Nation in a North African Oasis.” Dakhlia explores historiography of the southwestern Tunisian town of Nefta, 145 kilometres northwest of Douz. In Douz as in Nefta, the extant scholarly versions of local history have flaws. They are either woefully incomplete, are written accounts of oral legends, or are based on French texts from the colonial era (Dakhlia 1993:62-64).

In the case of Marzougi, his accounts of Douz and the Marazig focus on the links to historically significant holy men, the migration of the ancestors of the Marazig from Hijaz and Yemen to North Africa as part of the Arab conquest, and the homogeneity and piety of the Marazig. Dakhlia points out that these facets permit the residents of southern Tunisia to

tell a history of themselves that stresses their origins and faithfulness and distances themselves from the political history of the nation that at times is not always honourable (ibid.:63).

The focus of historical narratives concerning Douz is geographic origin and group lineage. Dakhliia states that instead of political accounts of local history “we find one divisive memory: a familial memory, almost indifferent to regional or national history, which recreates its own historical time, in which the emphasis is religious rather than political” (ibid.:58). Throughout the histories of the region, as in most of Tunisia “the dominant model for these legends of origins is Shereefian¹ in that it asserts descent from Muhammed ... claiming descent from one of his companions or, similarly, from an ancestor from the East, ‘from Hijaz, from Yemen’ ” (ibid.:68). This is also the case in Douz. Marzougi and Jean Seran² suggest that the ancestors of the Marazig came from the East, namely Hijaz, and descended from Uqba bin Nafi. Dakhliia states “these legends ... in the first place, should be considered as a discourse in legitimization, as a profession of faith and of oneself, are at the same time bearers of a history; the nuances and onomastics of the tales reveal the status system found in the oasis and a certain hierarchy of origins, if not of groups” (ibid.:69).

The oral narratives in Douz, as in Nefta, are vehicles for establishing identity. Just as, I argue, the Douz Festival is a site for the negotiation of identity, local histories have also been a forum to accomplish the same thing. Dakhliia states, “Nefta men do define themselves in terms of these incomplete and elliptic accounts, not only as members of a lineage, but also as inhabitants of the oasis of the Jerida, as Muslims, Arabs, and as Tunisian citizens” (ibid.:59). The men of Douz describe themselves in exactly the same way. My informant

¹ *Shurfa* (pl.) and *sharif* (or *shareef*, sing.) are used to describe descendants of the Prophet Muhammad.

² Jean Seran was an officer in the French Camel Corps, and spent time among the Marazig in Douz in the 1940s (Bouguerra 2006:27).

Belgecem explained that he describes himself as a descendent of Sidi Marzoug and Ghouth, a “Ouini” (being from Laouina), Bedouin, Tunisian, African, Muslim, a traditional man, and at the same time a modern man and a global citizen. As I demonstrate throughout this thesis, festival performances articulate and reinforce the same expressions of identity.

Marzougi’s writings are important testaments of Marazig-ness to the residents of Douz. The first chapter of Marzougi’s 1979 monograph *Maarek wa Abtal: Thourat al Marazig (Battles and Champions: Revolution of the Marazig)*³ is devoted to the history of the Marazig. In his 1980 monograph *Ma’a al-badu fi halihim wa tuhalilim (With the Bedouins in Their Solutions and Travels)*, he thoroughly describes the customs associated with all local rites of passage, most notably the nuptial ones, which are substantiated by my informants. I will discuss some of these practices in Chapter 6. Although some residents offer the caveat that his book is dated, it is nonetheless a valuable account of Marazig traditions as they were practised in the first two-thirds of the twentieth century, and are practised even now in the same form by some families. However flawed, these are the most significant writings on Douz and the Marazig available that have been prepared by a local authority. It is interesting to note that Dakhliia states that description of local customs, and the absence of a genuine description of political history, is common in narratives like Marzougi’s (Dakhliia:58).

Like Marzougi’s works, accounts of the Marazig and Douz written by French authors during (Jean Seran) and after (Vincent Bisson) the protectorate years are also problematic, as will be demonstrated throughout this chapter. Seran’s book is largely a personal account of his time in southern Tunisia as a French Army officer while Bisson’s is a commentary on the economics, politics and geography of Douz. Earlier writings (Marius Idoux) are rooted in outdated nineteenth-century ethnographic methods that focus on the relationship between physical traits and behaviour from a Western European perspective. Dakhliia points out that

³ Two dates are given on the title page, 1943 is given without explanation, 1979 is given as the date of the first edition.

during the protectorate French officers wrote histories of the region based on oral accounts they gathered. She points out that the accounts the French collected are based on the same stories that local citizens have been sharing for generations. The officers' attempts to collect "correct histories" are plagued by the same problems that affect all other oral histories of the region; they focus on ancestry rather than events (Dakhli:65). The community's acceptance of the colonial histories serves to further legitimize the stories. (ibid.:66).

This is one of the major challenges in outlining an accurate history of Douz and the Marazig; many of the accounts, including those by Marzougi and Seran, are based on oral histories. Although Marzougi mentions that early documents exist confirming his account of local history, he does not provide any details on these texts. Neither my informants nor other authors have information about them. It is important to note that the oral accounts and the histories based on them have striking historiographic similarities. They focus on family history, lineage, and geographic origins as well as connections to the Prophet Muhammad, his companions, or other holy men. The accounts have an inconsistent internal sense of time and ignore the historical relationship to the indigenous Berber communities. Despite the fact that a few residents of Douz identify with the Berber traditions found in the region (such as their tattoos, clothing, and jewellery), accounts of Berber groups are notably absent from local histories. I suggest that this is the case because Berbers are associated with pre-Islamic paganism (ibid.:60-61) and the residents of Douz embrace conservative Sunni Islam and reject local connections to anything other than it.

After an exhaustive literature search, it became evident that other trustworthy scholarly histories of Douz and the Marazig may not exist. I have not been able to consult two monographs that might fill the lacuna: *Madinat Duz: namudhaj al-tadakhul bayna al-badawah wa-al- hadarah fi al-janub al-Tunisi* (*The City of Douz Between Past and Present in Southern Tunisia*), written by Muhammed al-'Aziz Najahi in 1993, and *Duz:*

Dhakirati (I Remember Douz), third edition, by Nouredine Bettaïeb in 2008. If they do fill the gap in the literature, it is noteworthy that neither current Tunisian scholars nor the more learned residents of Douz mention them.

The Early Inhabitants of Douz

A perfect illustration of the problems with Marzougi's accounts can be found by examining his explanation of the origins of the naming of Douz. Marzougi offers several possible origins of the name "Douz", however most are proposed without evidence or explanation. First, he states that the name "Douz" appears in an ancient Roman atlas; the name may predate the arrival of Islam in the region and might be a Berber name. He unfortunately does not explain the connection between the Berber name and the atlas. Second, he claims that Ibrahim ibn Maamoun stated in his 1974 festival lecture that it is a Berber name meaning "green land". Third, he proposes that the name might be Latin; however, if this is the case, its meaning is unknown (Marzougi 1979:20). Fourth, he states that it could be the name of a tribe, a farm, or a person that was later adopted as a place name. Unfortunately, neither Roman nor Berber archaeological traces have been found in this region as yet to provide evidence of the date or details of their inhabitation (ibid.).

Although Berbers have lived in Tunisia for thousands of years, Marzougi states that Arabs entered this area for the first time in the year 670 AD under the command of Uqba Ibn Nafi (ibid.). According to Moroccan-born historian 'Abd Allah 'Arawi, Uqba had a strategic plan for conquering the region and arrived, after his conquest of the Ghadames Oasis in Northwest Libya in 644, with an army estimated at ten thousand horsemen ('Arawi 1977:80-81). He oversaw the construction of the first mosque in the south in the town of Telmine, 35 kilometres north of Douz, in 673 (Marzougi 1979:20). The following year he established the town of Kairouan on a large plateau in the centre of the country and commissioned the building of the Great Mosque of Kairouan, the most significant Muslim holy site in Africa

(Julien 1970:7; 'Arawi 1977:81; Abun-Nasr 1987:29). Marzougi states that when Arabs first entered the area, possibly under Uqba or during a later expedition, they encountered a town by the name of Douz. He claims that there was another, more westerly site also known as Douz. This western locale was called *Douz al-A'alah* (highest Douz); the town of modern Douz was known as *Douz al-Asfal* (low Douz) (Marzougi 1979:20). Additional information on Uqba and his connection to the Marazig will appear below.

The Marazig

As the primary ethnic group residing in Douz, Marzougi's quest to find the story of the Marazig people began with interviews of the elders in Douz (ibid.:10). Unfortunately, many of them gave him tribal family trees and stories that did not make sense historically or logically (ibid.:10-11). Some stories fallaciously traced Marazig lineage back to Islamic *ashref* (nobility) and the Prophet Muhammad. He suggests that these stories were most likely propagated in order to command power and respect from other ethnic groups (ibid.:12). After a lengthy discussion of historical accounts, he suggests that the Marazig are *m'rabat* (devout Muslims who are not nobility) and not *ashref* (ibid.).

Following a description of the various ethnic groups named "Marazig" as they appear in the dictionary of Arab tribes, Marzougi concluded that the one most relevant for Douz is one identified as "*Ouled Marzoug*", who are described as residing in North Africa (ibid.:13-14). The dictionary of Arab tribes claims that the *Ouled Marzoug* belong to the Banu Sulaym tribal confederation. Marzougi states,

the reputed features and behaviour of the Marazig tell us that they are Arabs of the peninsula: they are dark skinned, their eyes are sharp, their faces tell us they are arrogant, they tend to tell jokes and make fun of things, they quickly anger and forgive, when they get angry they kill, if they forgive they might even sacrifice themselves, they are extremely generous, brave and daring, and they treat woman both nicely and like animals. Their lives are full of contradictions (ibid.:14).

Marzougi admits that many of these myths are generalized qualities that can be assigned to most ethnic groups (ibid.). He states that they inherited from their Banu Sulaym grandfathers a love for stories, poetry and literature along with a strong connection to Islam (ibid.:29).

Fortunately, there is a wealth of reliable scholarly literature concerning early Arab tribes. The Banu Sulaym was a Northern Arab tribe from the Hijaz on the Arabian Peninsula that wielded great power east of the Mecca-Medina line (Tabari, trans. Kraemer 1985: xv and 17). Along with the Banu Hilal tribal confederation, they migrated to Egypt in the eighth century (Abun-Naser 1987:69; Adabi 2013:70). Together, the tribes invaded the Maghrib in 1050 or 1051 and overthrew Al- Mu'izz ibn Bādīs, the fourth ruler of the Zirid Berber dynasty in North Africa, a year later in 1052 (Abun-Naser 1987:69). The Banu Hilal went on to conquer the fertile plains in central Tunisia (ibid.).

According to Marzougi, the Banu Sulaym colonized the south of Tunisia, where their descendants are now to be found; they are the progenitors of the Ouled Yacoub, Ouled Saleem, and the Marazig (Marzougi 1979:17).⁴ Marzougi also says, without substantiation from other sources, that not all of the original Marazig people stayed in Douz. There are Marazig neighbourhoods in the Tunisian towns of Nabeul, Mattar, Jendouba, and they are descendants of the first group of the Ouled Marzoug that came with the Banu Hilal confederation (ibid.:19). He states that there are also Marazig communities in Libya, Egypt, Algeria and Morocco (ibid.:18-19). Marzougi claims that the Marazig of Douz were migratory within Saharan southern Tunisia until they finally settled in Douz at the end of the 8th century AH (ibid.:19).⁵

Several of my informants have mentioned their fascination with the stories about the Banu Sulaym in the region and have asked me to investigate the newest literature on the tribe

⁴ Marzougi's claims were supported by my informants and printed on informational signs in the Museum of the Sahara in Douz, but were not substantiated by any of the more scholarly print sources.

⁵ 8th century AH = 1299 AD – 1397 AD

each time I visit Douz. I suggest that this interest, like the regular performances of *raqs mayazy* at the Douz Festival and throughout the year, highlights the importance of the Bedouin warrior image to identity in Douz. Along with cosmopolitanism and the association with conservative Sunni Islam, it is a vital part of what it means to be “of Douz.”

Sidi Marzoug

Sidi Marzoug is accepted by historians and residents of Douz as the progenitor of the Marazig people. Jean Seran provides a detailed story of the life of Sidi Marzoug as told to him by Bettaieb Merzougui, who states that his version is the same one that his grandfather told him (Seran 1948:17). Seran’s monograph *Parcours Marazig (Routes of the Marazig)*, published in 1948, is an historical and ethnographic account of the Marazig from a French colonial perspective. Seran’s descriptions tend to romanticize Bedouin life and depict the major historical figures as heroes. His account is useful since it repeats and complements the Marazig history provided by Marzoug.

Based on the oral histories that he gathered, Seran states that Sidi Marzoug was a descendant of Uqba ibn Nafi, the seventh-century military hero described above (Seran:17). Uqba’s descendants claimed loyalty to the Idrisid Dynasty, which under Sultan Idris I was credited with the early Islamization of Morocco. According to Seran, Abdallah Bou Dabbous Choukrani, who was one of these descendants as well as Sidi Marzoug’s father, had settled in Shakshuk, Tripolitaine after making the trip from Morocco to Medina and Mecca, to find out about the land of his ancestors. No other additional information about the family is provided, except that “between other children, there was a son called Marzoug” (ibid.:19). The young Sidi Marzoug left Shakshuk for the west. After the death of his father, he was promoted to the chief of the family and migrated to southern Tunisia with his extended family. Seran speculates that he might have had visions of fighting battles in Tunisia or returning the Moroccan Kingdom to a rightful descendant of Sultan Idris I. Initially the group settled east

of Gafsa, but after a conflict with a local group, they resettled in a village named Ayacha on Mt. Shamsi, thirty kilometres from el Guettar (ibid.:21).

Marzougi's accounts agree with part of the story: that Sidi Marzoug was a member of the Banu Sulaym tribal confederation whose family originated from the Arabian Peninsula and that he migrated to Shakshuk in Libya, then continued on to settle in the *Nefzaoua* region of southern Tunisia.

French geography scholar Vincent Bisson, who has done extensive research in Douz, claims that Sidi Marzoug lived in the 11th century AD (Bisson 1994:35). He suggests that Sidi Marzoug promoted the puritanical doctrines of Ibn Yacine, an 11th century saint whose doctrine was the foundation for the Almoravid Dynasty (ibid.). The Almoravids were a federation of Berber tribes that dominated North and West Africa in the 11th century. According to Bisson, the promotion of the Almoravid ministry coincided with the arrival of the Banu Sulaym and Banu Hilal confederations in North Africa. He also asserts that Sidi Marzoug's alignment with the philosophy of Ibn Yacine and his influence in the *Nefzaoua* may have contributed to the wave of social conservatism in the region; he also makes the remarkable claim that this wave has endured for over a millennium (ibid.:36). Whatever we think of this argument, the residents of the towns surrounding Douz are not hesitant to say that Douz has been conservative for as long as they can remember.

The stories explain that Sidi Marzoug used his administrative skills to bring together nomadic Berbers of the Sahara, nearby sedentary communities, and other Arab factions. His mosque created a fixed place in Douz for the nomadic tribes to settle (Bisson 1994:35; Seran, 1948:19-21). Ultimately, Sidi Marzoug resettled in the nearby town of Gueliada (Seran 1948:23), 35 kilometres northwest of Douz, and is buried there (Belgecem, interview on 26 May 2011).

Mahjoub and Ghouth

Because of their contributions to the development of the town, two descendants of Sidi Marzoug are even more important to the residents of Douz: Hamed al Ghouth and Omar al Mahjoub. According to Marzougi and popular discourse, Omar Ibn Ali Ibn Hamid Ibn Marzoug (Omar al Mahjoub) and Hamid Ibn Marzoug Ibn Abdallah Boudbous (Hamid al Ghouth), both descendants of Sidi Marzoug, settled in this area in the end of the 8th century AH (Marzougi 1979:21,24)⁶. In the opening chapter of *Maarek wa Abtal*, Marzougi gives a lengthy presentation of evidence that Hamid al Ghouth is the grandfather of Omar al Mahjoub, despite the fact that he also refers to Hamid al Ghouth as his brother, uncle and great uncle. There is considerable confusion concerning their relationship, their full names notwithstanding, and that is why he presents extensive evidence for his assertion. In fact, some of my informants insist that Mahjoub is the grandfather of Ghouth. Others have insisted that Ghouth is the grandson of Sidi Marzoug (the son of Marzoug's eldest son) and Mahjoub is Ghouth's nephew. Everyone agrees that Ghouth is buried in Douz and Mahjoub in Laouina. I do not intend to confirm or refute Marzougi's argument here. What is important is their place in the history of Douz and the fact that the Marazig of Douz and Laouina continue to venerate Ghouth and Mahjoub (Bisson 1994:35; Belgecem, interview on 26 May 2011).

Marzougi claims there is a property valuation document from the end of the fourteenth century stating that the region called *Genat at Taraïd* (Paradise of Taraïd, the displaced people)—the area now known as Douz—was assessed at a value of 120 dinar (Marzougi 1979:21) and that Mahjoub bought the property for 100 dinar (ibid.: 21-22). The document confirms that Mahjoub and Ghouth settled in the region at the end of the fourteenth century. Marzougi adds that Ghouth established Douz and that Mahjoub settled in the area shortly after his grandfather and established Laouina, the southern portion of town. He states

⁶ End of 14th Century AD (Haig 1932).

that both men were *marabouts* (holy men, ascetics); they were extremely religious, spent many hours praying in the *zaouia*, and avoided the temptations of daily life (ibid.:22). A discussion of maraboutism (the veneration of *marabouts*, or holy men) in Douz appears below.

Because Mahjoub and Ghouth were considered holy men and it was a *baraqa* (blessing) to be near them, Marzougi states that Marazig and Arab families settled close to them and their children. Additionally, the Marazig settled here because it fit their way of life. They were Bedouins and herders searching for the best place for their animals. They needed herbage and trees in the spring and water in the summer. Douz was the most appropriate place for this (ibid.:23).

Although Sidi Marzoug, Mahjoub, and Ghouth are important to the history of Douz, and were frequently mentioned by my informants during interviews and casual conversations, rarely are they mentioned in the context of the festival. Although some residents still participate in the annual *zarda*, or festival pilgrimage, to the *zawa* (tombs) of Mahjoub and Ghouth, in 2013 the planning of the event was blocked by the Salafist community in Douz. I discuss this, and an informant's plan to arrange a festival to replace the *zarda*, in Chapter 8. I suggest that the reputation of Sidi Marzoug, Mahjoub, and Ghouth as Bedouin warriors and faithful servants of *Allah* is more important than their individual stories when considering the construction of identity in Douz, or the negotiation of it at the festival.

Maraboutism in the 20th and 21st Centuries: Sidi Marzoug, Mahjoub and Ghouth

One perspective of the image of Sidi Marzoug, Mahjoub, and Ghouth in modern Douz comes from the writings of Bisson. The residents of Douz hold his writings in high esteem because he is the author of the only modern monograph on the town, even though he is often critical of local politics. Bisson contends that the history of Douz demonstrates it is a town built from a tribal society, and one with a foundation in maraboutism. In the case of

Douz, it is the veneration of Ghouth and Mahjoub. Interestingly, Sidi Marzoug is highly regarded but not venerated like the others. Bisson adds that the image of the *marabouts*' tombs represents a veritable anchor of faith for the society and subsequently offers a way to justify the *marabouts*' presence in history. The existence of the *marabouts* gives sanctity to the tribe's land. Bisson also suggests that although maraboutism strengthens the piety and identity of the community, it also creates a distinct division between the citizens of Douz. Those who live in Douz *Gharbi* (west) and *Chergui* (east) (see Figure 3. Map of Douz, page 60) have a special connection to Ghouth because of their proximity to his tomb and those who live in Laouina feel more connected to Mahjoub for the same reason (Bisson 1994:35).

I asked several of my informants about how the residents of Douz perceive Sidi Marzoug, Ghouth and Mahjoub. Abdelati is a respected sculptor, calligrapher, writer, producer, and historian in his late fifties who has intermittently served as the artistic director of the Douz Festival since 1981. Regarding *marabouts*, Abdelati said that Sidi Marzoug is important, but that he is perceived in different ways throughout the south. In Tozeur and Nefta, two other major towns in southwestern Tunisia, he is venerated as a black *marabout* (a discussion of blackness in Tunisia appears in Chapter 6). In Douz, according to Salem, he is exclusively understood as a forefather to the two *marabouts* of Douz, Ghouth and Mahjoub. Both Ghouth and Mahjoub were scholars and are respected as such. Ghouth is slightly more prominent because he was older and was Mahjoub's uncle. Both men believed in the *Quran*, *Allah*, and the power of the intellect. It is not thought that they had divine or magical powers.

Another informant is Saif, a twenty-nine year-old clothing vendor and former primary-school teacher in Douz whom I first met in 2009 through his 27 year-old brother Fawzi, a truck driver and former shopkeeper in the central marketplace (more information on Saif is provided in Chapter 1). About the two *marabouts* of Douz Saif said:

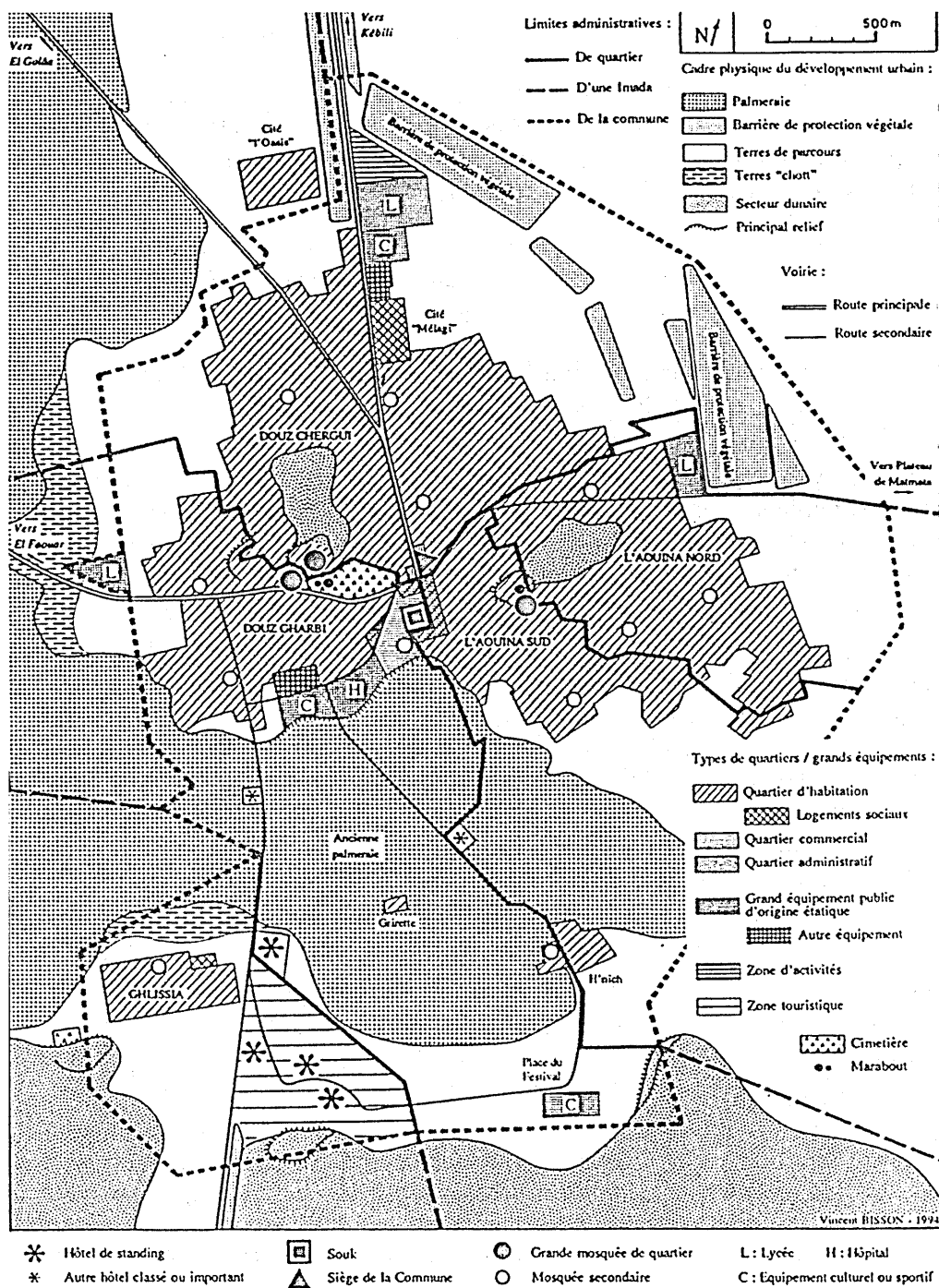


Figure 3. Map of Douz (Bisson 2000:29)

Mahjoub was the first man in Laouina, the eastern village of Douz. His *zaouia* is in the Laouina mosque. Ghouth was the first man in central Douz. His *zaouia* is in the mosque near the Douz cemetery. Some people go and pray to them because they feel they have special powers. People ask for healing for themselves, for their children, or for special favours. The *marabouts* were invented during the French colonization because the French wanted to undermine everything native, both religion and thought. They wanted to destabilize Islam and traditional ways in order to gain power over

Tunisians, so they promoted these *marabouts* as a way to create separation between man and *Allah* and distance Tunisians from pure Islam (interview 2 January 2011).

Shortly after I relayed this account to my informant Belgecem, he said that indeed this is all correct. Personally, he feels that since Mahjoub and Ghouth were holy men, their graves are good and holy places to go pray to *Allah*. However, he clarified that one should still be praying to *Allah*, and not Mahjoub and Ghouth. They do not have divine powers, but their graves are holy places.

It was surprising to learn that some individuals in Douz believe maraboutism was a by-product of French colonization. I was unable to find literature supporting this conjecture and most of my informants had no interest or information on the relationship between maraboutism and colonialism. Latifa al-Akhdar, in her book *Al-Islam al-Turuqi* (The Paths of Islam), outlines her theory that the French worked closely with the Sufi brotherhoods in order to strengthen their position in the country. Al-Akhdar does not suggest that maraboutism was promoted or invented by the French. Hisham Aidi proposes a similar theory and states, “French administrators supported ... Sufi orders against the nationalist movements which embraced a more puritan version of Islam. French rule encouraged Sufi rites and festivals to control populations, but also to promote tourism” (Aidi 2014:120). Although there is little evidence to suggest that there was substantial tourism in southern Tunisia until after independence, writings by al-Akhdar (1993) and Aidi (2014) appear to support Saif’s proposal regarding the role the French administration in religious life in Tunisia during the Protectorate Era.

Maraboutism is distinct from Sufism in the sense that it is solely the veneration of one or more holy men.⁷ As opposed to Sufism, there are no supererogatory practices associated

⁷ The literature typically describes these holy men using the French terms *marabout* (sing.) and *marabouts* (pl.). In Douz they are referred to as *murabit* (sing.) and *murabitun* (pl.). I use the French terms in this thesis in order to be consistent with the scholarly literature.

with maraboutism. Practitioners may go to the *zaouia* of the *marabout* and recite *suwar* (pl., sing. *sura*, chapter) from the *Quran*, or offer a *du'a* (personal supplication). Sufi orders or *turuq* (sing., *tariqa*), on the other hand, are generally focused on the teachings and prescribed practices of a spiritual master. These practices, believed to have mystical qualities, might include the repetitions of selected *suwar* or litanies written by an order's founder. Some orders also have silent meditative practices, such as some divisions of the Naqshbandi order, and dance rituals like the whirling dervishes of the Mevlevi order. Although *tariqa* members have great respect for their founders, they are generally not venerated as *marabouts*. In Sufism, the *baraqa* is contained in the practices; in maraboutism, it is bestowed onto believers by the spirit of the *marabout*. There are exceptions. In Tunisia, Sidi Ben Arous, founder of the Arousiya order, is also venerated by some as a *marabout*. The decision to be a member of the order and to venerate him as a *marabout* is based on personal conviction or family tradition.

The association between maraboutism and colonialism by some residents of Douz is more likely related to the generally conservative (and sometimes puritanical) religious attitude of the contemporary Marazig. As observed throughout my interviews, the residents of Douz reject Sufism and anything that is not mainstream Sunni Islam (a discussion of this is in subsequent chapters). Even though he has no solid evidence to support it, my informant Mustapha, a 48-year-old post office service manager from Kebili, feels that Marazig thinking has been influenced over the years by Wahhabism, a branch of Sunni Islam that promotes a literal interpretation of the *Quran* and *Hadith*, and a conservative vision of the faith. Mustapha explained that there are Sufi brotherhoods and spiritual communities that venerate *marabouts* throughout the towns in southern Tunisia. These towns readily accept these groups and their traditions. Most citizens of Douz view the practices of Sufism and

maraboutism as *haram* (forbidden by Islam) and deny the fact that there are Sufi and maraboutic communities in their town.

Modern Douz

Many of my informants agreed that the Marazig were predominantly semi-nomadic until the beginning of the twentieth century. However, they never ventured far from Douz. They added that by the 1920s, many Marazig had permanently settled in Douz, except for annual or semi-annual trips to the desert. As remarked in Chapter 1, many families in Douz continue to take a two or three-week spring trek through the desert with tents and livestock, reminiscent of the transhumance journeys that have been practiced for centuries. The image of transhumance is an important one in Douz; scenes of families with camels and sheep traversing the desert are often part of the opening day ceremonies at *Place H'nich*.

Traditionally, transhumance refers to the movement of people with their livestock between established summer and winter grazing grounds, however, geographer John Clark states that Tunisian transhumance is unique as it means “the seasonal pastoral migrations from steppe to tell in summer and from tell to steppe in winter.” (Clark 1955:160). A tell is a man-made mound that usually covers the ruins of an ancient town or village; a steppe is an extended treeless plain (*Oxford English Dictionary*, Accessed 27 January 2014).

Since most Marazig in Douz today do not rely on raising livestock for their livelihood, the trips between the steppe and the tell are not essential. Most families do maintain a small flock of goats and sheep for the ritual slaughter customary for the major holidays *Eid al-Fitr* and *Eid al-Adha*. Flocks live comfortably within family compounds. The journey through the desert with livestock is not done out of necessity but, as one informant explained, it is a relaxing holiday that removes them from the hassles of modern life and allows them to experience their grandparents' way of life. Additionally, it gives their livestock an

opportunity to graze in some of the fertile desert oases. It also serves as a modern day ritual that affirms the semi-nomadic origins of the Marazig.

The patterns of migration throughout the countryside by the Marazig have political, climatic and historical origins that have been articulated by many of my informants and Marzougi (see Marzougi 1980). Clark states that there is evidence that semi-nomadic groups continued their seasonal migrations while Tunisia was under Roman rule. When Tunisia was part of the Ottoman Empire, before it became a French Protectorate, it was in a state of economic stagnation, troubled by poverty, and plagued by disease (Clark 1955:157; Gallagher 2002:25; Perkins 2004:12). Regular migration between the steppe and the tell became the norm (Clark 1955:157). According to Clark, the semi-nomads of the steppes would go to the tell for its verdant pastures and lower temperatures and would cultivate grain and olives there (ibid.:158). In the pre-Protectorate era, families would travel together to protect themselves from thieves and according to Clark, by the 1950s they would “journey in small groups in daily stages of about 12 miles to well-known water holes along the traditional tracks” (ibid.:161).

Although the Marazig have been sedentary since the middle of the twentieth century, many of the practices from the days of semi-nomadism continue. Although a detailed discussion of Marazig transhumance is outside the scope of this thesis, it is important to acknowledge it as a symbol of Douz’s past and as part of Marazig identity. Local shepherds still move their flocks seasonally as their fathers and grandfathers did. Caravans of camels regularly traverse the streets of Douz. Rites of passage, including traditional weddings and funerals, closely match those described by Marzougi from the beginning of the twentieth century. However, the arrival of the French authorities in 1882 did signal the start of a new, modern era for Douz that transformed the Marazig from a semi-nomadic population to a fixed one. My informants did not conceive of tradition and modernity in this way. Informants

had their own way of designating the start of modernity in Douz. For some it was the beginning of the Protectorate era and the establishment of Douz as a well-defined municipality. For others it was the end of the Protectorate era and the creation of the Republic of Tunisia. Still others stated that it was World War II, when Tunisia became an important part of the military theatre for the Allied Forces. In any event, modernity in Douz is associated with the end of nomadism and the intensification of Tunisia's relationship with France and the West.

The French and Southern Tunisia

It is not by accident that southern Tunisia, and more precisely the Djerid—the south-central region that surrounds the two salt lakes, Chott al-Gharsa and Chott al-Djerid—became a militarized zone early in the protectorate era. The Djerid, long recognized as important culturally, geographically, and commercially, is home to some of the largest and most prosperous oases in North Africa (Clancy Smith 1997:130). The regional oases are renowned for their deglet noor dates, which are considered to be among the finest in the area, and are a foundation of the local economy (ibid.:129). The routes through the Djerid were extremely important, and were frequented for trade and transport between Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and, eventually, the Mediterranean and Europe (ibid.:130). After the French occupation of Tunisia and Algeria, both Tunisians and Algerians chose this route for *hajj* (the pilgrimage to Mecca) and for permanent migration to the Ottoman Empire, because it minimized encounters with French authorities (ibid.:131).

Early during the French Occupation there were conflicts between the French and the Tunisians. According to Kenneth Perkins, “Significant opposition developed only in the interior of central and southern Tunisia, where a full-scale revolt erupted during the summer [of 1881]. Fear of the French was compounded by anger with the *bey* (Muhammad al-Sadiq Bey). Tribal leaders chastised him for submitting to the French too readily and questioned his

fitness to rule” (Perkins 1986:85). Anita Baker documents local resistance to French occupation near Sfax and Gabes during the spring and early summer of 1882 (Baker 1983:195). Ultimately, southern resistance was overpowered by French and Tunisian troops at the end of 1882 (Perkins 1986:86).

The French left the existing local governance structure in place. They appointed the *qaid*s, the traditional provincial governors, whose jurisdiction was established by tribal boundaries. The *qaid*s were responsible for collecting taxes, maintaining order, and overseeing the *shaikh*s (Perkins 1987:86). *Shaikh*s, appointed by the French in consultation with the *qaid*s, were the local tribal and municipal leaders (ibid.).

Understanding the history of Douz during the French protectorate years is problematic because there are so many contradictory viewpoints. My informants suggested that during these years, the Marazig realized the advantages of the Western systems of education, agriculture, commerce and medicine. Their accounts always suggest a peaceful acceptance of the French schemes. On the contrary, Bisson states that the French occupation of the region was neither easy nor peaceful, and that there were bloody episodes between the Marazig and the French in the mid-1940s (Bisson 1994:42). Informants have never mentioned this, and instead have shown me pictures of Marazig soldiers fighting alongside the French during World War II. Both Wasallati and Martelli state that the Marazig did not want to be colonized by the French (Wasallati 2003-2004:32; Martelli 2005-2006:106). Wasallati claims that some Marazig actively resisted colonization, and others left for the nearby countryside or Libya. She states that the French made a concerted effort to entice the Marazig to settle. They built a well for livestock in 1908 and wells for drinking water in 1909 and 1911. The well built in 1911 allowed the creation of an oasis. In 1910, a weekly market was established in the centre of town to encourage nomadic families to stay (Wasallati 2003-2004:32; see Martelli 2005-2006:106 for additional information). Wasallati and Martelli’s

suggestions of somewhat tense relationships with the French seem in keeping with the broader histories of southern Tunisia outlined by more established scholars like Perkins and Baker, cited above.

A detailed discussion of the French-Marazig relationship during the protectorate period is outside the scope of this thesis. However, it is important to acknowledge the conflicting attitudes towards the French influence in contemporary Douz. Some of my informants have suggested that the educational and medical institutions established by the French are vital to their quality of life. They stated that the administrative infrastructure established by the French has improved life in Douz. Others believe that the French colonization of North Africa has contributed to the erosion of Bedouin and Marazig identities. These informants stated that some residents have forgotten about their ancestral roots. It is interesting that there is only one festival act that references the colonial era, a French-style brass band that marches through *Place H'nich* during the opening ceremonies. The absence of colonial-era images from the festival is an indicator of the complex relationship between the French and the Tunisians.

The citizens of Douz, as is the case throughout Tunisia, have a love-hate relationship with France and French citizens. On one hand, the residents of Douz admit they envy France—it is an economically and politically stable country with a strong sense of national pride and heritage. Tunisians appreciate French music, movies, literature, and fashion. The use of French as a prominent second language in Tunisia (and its use as the dominant language for the business and scientific communities) increases the cultural bonds between the countries. On the other hand, some residents of Douz resent the French mark left on Tunisia during the protectorate years. Many feel that the French-Tunisian relationship, and the influence that France still has over social, political, and economic affairs in their country, hinders the expression of an authentic Tunisia. Many citizens of Douz rely on the income

from French tourists in order to survive economically. At the same time, they resent such reliance.

The Franco-Tunisian relationship, represented by the performance by the French-style brass band, is one of the many facets of Douz's identity that is negotiated during the International Festival of the Sahara. The negotiation is enacted through the way in which people relate to their histories. For some, the history takes the form of accounts of tribes, leaders, places and events. For others, history is embedded in poetry, dance, music, and costumes. Both of these, the historical accounts and the performances, are ways in which citizens articulate what it means to be "of Douz." The Tunisian and Marazig character of much of these things is an assertion of an identity that has outlasted French colonialism.

Conclusion

Both the International Festival of the Sahara and the stories about Douz and the Marazig serve to promulgate the ideas that the residents of the town have about themselves. As we have seen, there is very little evidence-based history about Douz and the Marazig. The accounts of the Marazig and Douz are based on oral accounts that resemble those of other groups and towns in southern Tunisia. The stories promote three fundamental narratives. First, the Marazig are descendants of Bedouin and nomadic tribes that arrived in North Africa from the east. Bedouin lineage, as Racy explains, is equated with the virtues of purity, honour, and authenticity throughout the Arab world (Racy 1996:405). As I suggest in Chapter 1, the alignment with Bedouin and nomadic heritage is a way of describing oneself as wholesome, honest, and authentic—traits that my informants also equate with "being Marazig"—and differentiates the people "of Douz" from the "Other". Second, the histories associate the Marazig with fearless fighters, most notably Uqba ibn Nafi. The image of the warrior is an important one at the festival. As described earlier in this chapter, the only dance performed at the festival that is unique to Douz is *raqs mayazy*, the warrior's rifle dance. Every young boy

in Douz knows the dance; it is the quintessential symbol of masculinity and bravery. Third, the accounts stress that Douz's founders and the Marazigs' progenitors were good Muslims and pious men. The images of the holy men in these stories mark the people of Douz as descendants of devout Muslims and differentiate the Marazig from the communities in other parts of southern Tunisia that practice pre-Islamic and Sufi traditions.

As Dakhliia suggests, the transmission of oral histories based on religion, origins, and lineage, coupled with the lack of accounts of political and social history, may allow citizens to dissociate themselves from the national history and construct their own local version that only partially reflects fact (Dakhliia 1993:63). Just as oral narratives about the history of Douz construct images of local distinctiveness while avoiding the story of the nation, so does the festival.

Chapter 3: Civic, Secular, and Art-Centred Forms of Festivity

In this chapter I place festivals, specifically the Douz Festival, in the wider context of festive events featuring musical performance. To accomplish this, I describe the main types of festive events found in Tunisia and how they can be distinguished from one another. Throughout this thesis, I will use the term “festivity” to describe a larger, general category—namely, activities and events marking special occasions—and the term *festival* to describe a specific genre of community-based festivity (see first footnote below).

Here I explain the vocabulary that Tunisians use to describe the various forms of festivity, since the labels assigned to concerts, festive events, and other gatherings in Tunisia do not always clearly convey their importance, duration, intended audience, or purpose. I also examine typologies and taxonomies, then establish one of each with which to better analyse the Douz Festival. Typologies and taxonomies are important to the discussion of festivity because typologies describe abstract distinctions between festive events (e.g. what they do, how they do it, and why they do it) whereas taxonomies have an empirical basis in the categories of festivity used by my informants. The typology I created for this chapter will establish the most important characteristics that differentiate these events—sponsorship, content, duration, cost, audience, function—but, above all, whether they are secular, sacred, or somewhere in between. The taxonomy will outline the six most important forms of festivity in southern Tunisia, namely *spectacle* (pl. *spectacles*), *festival* (pl. *festivals*), weddings, *zarda* (pl. *zarady*), *hadhra* (pl. *hadhrat*), and *soirée stambeli* (pl. *soirées stambelis*).¹ In this chapter, I focus on civic, secular, and art-centred forms of festivity. Sacred and ritual forms, including weddings, are discussed in Chapter 4.

¹ I use the terms in italics to represent the French and Arabic words that Tunisians use to designate a specific event type. I will use the term in regular typeface to designate the broader concept of festivity.

This examination of festivity in Tunisia is necessary in order to recognize that the genre of the *festival* is an ideal forum for the negotiation and performance of identities. *Festivals* are public, community-based, multi-day events intended for both Tunisians and tourists that feature performances in all genres. Additionally, they are well funded by the government, and are highly visible because of state-sponsored marketing. Although government and police presence is apparent to ensure audiences are safe and crowds are controlled, the state does not appear to manipulate *festival* content. Thus, *festivals* are secure and accessible public venues for citizens to consider and enact what it means to be Tunisian.

Classification of Festive Events: Typology and Taxonomy

In order to explain the relationship between types of festivity and their functions, I draw from several models for classification in order to create one that fits the landscape of festivity in Tunisia. In the literature, music events are classified in two ways: through typologies and taxonomies. Event typologies are based on concepts rather than empirical cases. Typologies are usually derived from descriptions by external observers; however, observations from internal participants are sometimes taken into consideration. In contrast, event taxonomies are based on empirical evidence and are not concerned with conceptual models (see Smith 2002). Typologies reveal the underlying factors that influence the structure, format, and content of public festivity. Facets of these typologies then shape taxonomies.

Typologies

One model proposed by Paleo and Wijnberg (2006) outlines a general typology that categorizes Western popular music festivals based on seven aspects of economic function.

Each aspect is defined by a core question:

1. Character (is a contest involved?)
2. Purpose (is it for profit or not-for-profit?)
3. Range (which socio-economic groups attend?)

4. Format (is it a one-track festival or a multi-venue festival?)
5. Degree of institutionalization (to what degree is the festival connected to commercial or non-profit agents?)
6. Innovation of aural goods (are acts new and innovative or mainstream?)
7. Scope (is the festival regional, national, or international?)

Although my typology outlined below addresses many of these points, the Paleo and Wijnberg model alone is not practical for describing Tunisian forms of festivity because it assumes that musical events are first and foremost economic events. Although economic factors play a part in Tunisian festivity, I argue throughout this chapter that function and content are significantly more important to their nature and classification.

D'Astous's (2006) typology focuses on five factors based on consumers' perceptions of cultural festivals in Montreal²:

1. Dynamism (how do audiences perceive the event's energy level?)
2. Sophistication (do audiences think the festival is sophisticated?)
3. Openness to the world (do performances reflect world cultures?)
4. Reputation (is the festival well-known?)
5. Innovation (are there unpredictable and creative aspects of the event?)

These facets are based on descriptions gathered from focus groups conducted in Montreal by the author. Although this typology highlights important ways of characterizing festivity, not all of these factors are important to, or even considered by, audiences in Tunisia. None of my informants have ever mentioned dynamism or sophistication during formal or informal discussions. However, many do talk about "openness to the world." Not all Tunisian musical events include international guest artists. Based on my observations and interviews, it is not a defining characteristic of these events, but it could be a criterion for distinguishing one from another, and foreign guest artists are important to the Douz Festival, as I discuss in Chapter 7. Tunisians take great pride in their festive events and hold that every event is well known, especially their favourite ones. I exclude reputation from my typology for this reason;

² D'Astous describes cultural festivals as thematic public celebrations that occur once a year within a predetermined period of time (D'Astous 2006:14).

namely, it is not a useful criterion for classifying musical events in Tunisia. All the same, certain events do seem to have a better or more prestigious reputation than others: both the Carthage and Tabarka Festival are well known throughout the country, thanks in part to government-sponsored advertising. Tunisian academics and government employees have frequently mentioned the importance of these *festivals* to me. However, most Tunisians do not discuss these *festivals* because they cannot afford to attend them; only the wealthy elite and tourists can afford to buy tickets.

Although audience members never discussed innovation during fieldwork interviews, musicians did. Youssef in Tunis and Abdelati in Douz described in great length their ideas for including innovative material and activities in *festivals*. Youssef articulated his vision of an extended interactive *festival* exploring the intersection of Tunisian *stambeli* and American blues. Abdelati outlined his ideas for performances and art exhibits at the Douz Festival that would commemorate the Arab Spring. Both expressed their frustration with the status quo in regards to the format and content of musical events in Tunisia. This status quo, they explained, is driven by organizers' complacency and audience expectations.

O'Sullivan and Jackson, as part of their investigation of sustainable tourism in Wales, created a typology based on the following criteria (O'Sullivan and Jackson 2002):

1. Size (small, medium, large)
2. Spatial geography (rural, semi-rural, urban fringe, urban)
3. Major theme (arts, culture, entertainment)
4. Key management group (volunteers, local authority, partnership)
5. Purpose (cultural enrichment or entertainment for locals and visitors, economic development via tourism, economic development for partners and cultural enrichment and entertainment for locals and visitors)

Although their typology is useful for describing the basic parameters of public festivity, O'Sullivan and Jackson have overlooked the role of demographics, content, and sponsorship. In order to accurately assess the role of festivity in society it is important to understand who

attends, what is performed, and who pays for the performances. Undoubtedly, sources of funding influence the nature of festive performances and thus influence who attends.

In order to effectively classify genres of Tunisian festivity, I have devised a new typology drawing on these models and also informed by my fieldwork. My typology identifies events based on six criteria:

1. Sponsorship sources (who funds the event?)
2. Content (what types of acts are included? Does it reflect an openness to the world?)
3. Duration (how long is it?)
4. Cost (how much do tickets cost?)
5. Audience demographics (who are the audience members?)
6. Function (what is the purpose of the event? Is it private or public? Sacred or secular?)

I suggest that these are the critical elements that shape musical events in Tunisia. Although the economic approach outlined by Paleo and Wijnberg, the audience-centred one discussed by d'Astous, and the general one proposed by O'Sullivan and Jackson are valuable, some of the criteria they use are neither relevant to nor practical for classifying and describing musical events in Tunisia.

The first element of my typology is sponsorship. In Tunisia, the Ministry of Culture is a significant sponsor of cultural events. They award millions of dinars each year to support *festivals* and *spectacles*. Many of my informants have stated that grants are made based on political and family allegiances, and it is almost impossible for emerging artists to receive funding from the Ministry of Culture unless they "know someone." One informant, Anouar, an extremely successful 44 year-old singer-songwriter, confirmed this. He stated that he has received financial support both because of his contacts and his songs' progressive, pro-nationalist lyrics. Anouar added that there are numerous great artists in Tunisia, but the Ministry of Culture is not acknowledging many of them because they do not have the right connections. Other institutions provide support, including the *Théâtre National Tunisien*, the *Conservatoire National de Musique*, and the *Goethe-Institute*, especially if a *festival* or

spectacle takes place in one of their facilities. Large corporations often fund events, most notably the mobile phone companies Orange, Tunisie Télécom, and Ooredoo, the domestic airline TunisAir, and the multinational food distributor Danone. Many performers rely on small European non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private donors, and family members for financial backing. My informants claim that the source of sponsorship does not influence an event's content, but it does dictate size and duration.

Moving to the second criterion in my typology, Tunisian musical events include a wide variety of musical content including pop, rap, jazz, Western classical, Arab classical, and Western and Tunisian folk. The fact that many of the concerts featuring music from outside Tunisia are very well attended supports my argument in Chapter 7 that "openness to the world" is an important part of Tunisian identity. The third element of my typology, the duration and extent of these events, relies solely on funding. In 2012, I attended a popular music *festival* in Tunis titled *l'Art est Liberté* (Art is Freedom). Because of sparse funding, provided entirely by private donors, it was limited to one evening. In contrast, during the summer of 2013 I attended several of the events that were part of *AnouARTounés: Forum d'art pluriel et actual* (Lights of Tunisia: A Forum for Collective and Contemporary Art), a month-long multi-genre *festival*. Organizers were able to hold an extended *festival* because of generous sponsorship from private donors, an art gallery and a French NGO.

The most important factors influencing audience demographics in Tunisia are cost of admission and location (which is a factor of cost as well)—the fourth and fifth criterion in my typology. Free concerts in centrally located venues are always well attended by people from all walks of life, regardless of content. Although *l'Art est Liberté* was a free event, it was probably not well attended because it was held in a corner of Belvedere Park—a location requiring a cab ride or a long walk for most people in Tunis. Many of the concerts that are part of the Carthage Festival are not sold out and others draw a small audience. Carthage

Festival events are held in the ancient Roman amphitheatre in the town of Carthage, an affluent suburb, 17 kilometres northeast of Tunis. The minimum ticket price of TDN 10 (£4.25) is prohibitively expensive for all but an affluent minority.

The last element of my typology is function—the motivation for having the event. Some festive events are intended solely as entertainment, and some have other purposes. Part of the function facet of my typology is the issue of an event's intended audience and whether it is public or private. An event is often shaped by the nature of the audience, and will be very different if it is open to the general public as opposed to only invited guests. My informant Youssef periodically hosts *spectacles* in order to prove to friends and family—through the shows themselves and the crowds that show up—that he is still a creative force in the cultural community. He demonstrates that he has ideas and knows how to implement them. Certain events such as *soirées stambelis* and *hadhrat* serve different functions to different people. Some of my informants experience them as entertainment, others as spiritual practices, and yet others as social gatherings. I witnessed such an event at *Mausolée Sidi Ali Lasmar* in June 2013 during a fieldwork visit.

My informant Youssef invited me to the *Mausolée Sidi Ali Lasmar*, the tomb of and *zaouia* for a venerated holy man, for a type of *soirée stambeli* referred to as *chabaniya*. As a member of Tunis's *stambeli* he knew about the event but since he was not needed as a performer he was able to join me as an “audience member.” According to Youssef, *chabaniya* is a *stambeli* ritual that calls in both good and bad spirits before the start of Ramadan, at which point they get “trapped” until the end of Ramadan. This *chabaniya* served as a religious rite, entertainment, and social gathering. It was organized by the members of the community that venerate Sidi Ali Lasmar, a holy man that many Tunisians consider to be the *marabout* of Tunisia's black community. The musicians and dancers participating in the *chabaniya* were all part of Tunis's community of *stambeli* practitioners. The ensemble

consisted of a *gumbri* (a large three-stringed instrument that is the focal point of *stambeli* rites) player, eight *shqashiq* players, and four dancers including the *arifa* (the lead dancer and divination specialist). The *shqashiq* players sat on the ground in two rows facing one another. The *gumbri* player was positioned at the end of the rows facing the *shqashiq* players. The dancers gyrated between and around the two rows while the guests sat along the perimeter of the room within the *zaouia* watching the musicians and the dancers.

The event started just after the last *adhan* of the day, around 9:30 pm, and my informants stated that it would continue for five or six hours. Guest donations covered the expenses of *chabaniya*, including a modest fee paid to each musician and dancer, by placing donations in the folds of the *arifa*'s hat or on the ground near the musicians. Some guests attended for the *baraqa* (blessing) and sang and danced along with the performers. Others simply watched. However, dozens of guests seemed oblivious to the ritual and proceeded to eat, drink, smoke and chat with friends throughout the grounds of the *zaouia*. Thus, function is a factor of both the intention of the organizer and the needs of the guests. Events like this that have both secular and ritual elements will be explored in Chapter 4.

Taxonomies

In contrast to the discussion of conceptual typologies, an investigation of event taxonomies is based on actual musical gatherings. My first example comes from Chris Stone's assessment of British pop music festivals. He outlines a taxonomy based on a typology that addresses content, cost, targeted audience, location and the amenities that attendees are offered (Stone 2009:219-220):

1. Regional festival: exploiting the resources of a specific region
2. Religious music festival: promoting and celebrating religious music
3. Urban festival: indoor and outdoors events in towns and cities
4. Holiday destination festival: events held in exotic locations to promote international tourism
5. Premium festival: upmarket events offering amenities not offered at other festivals

6. Secret festival: events that are not publicized in order to create an intimate atmosphere of attendees that are “in the know”
7. Teenagers’ festival: targeted towards unaccompanied teenagers who are often neglected by and prohibited from other festivals
8. Deliberately constrained festival: tickets are limited in order to prevent overcrowding
9. Boutique festival: small-scale events that prioritize quality over quantity
10. Women’s’ festival: events focusing on feminist philosophy and female bands
11. Green festival: promoting environmental issues
12. Family festival: focus on performances and activities that attract families
13. Dual-location festival: events held in two locations at the same time; acts move between venues
14. Economy festival: features a wide variety of performances at a low cost to audiences and organizers
15. Political festival: events used to promote political messages
16. No-camping festival: Camping onsite or nearby is prohibited
17. Virtual festival: web-based festival; audiences watch performances online

Stone’s model effectively demonstrates that a typology based on content, cost, audience, location and amenities can result in a robust taxonomy. Using only these five typological facets he is able to create a taxonomy that covers many types of events. Unfortunately he does not explain or elaborate on his taxonomy; it solely exists as a table imbedded in a broader discussion of British pop music festivals.

Joe Wilson and Lee Udall used a slightly different taxonomic model to describe American folk festivals of the 1970s (Wilson and Udall 1982:4-5):

1. Indigenous festivals: “These celebrations grow from particular cultures and are a part of them. Control is by individuals from a culture and the event is directed towards the culture at large” (i.e. their culture).
2. Evolving indigenous festivals: “These events are similar to indigenous festivals in that they grow from the culture depicted, are monocultural, and are directed and controlled by persons from within the culture, and appeal primarily to an audience of persons from within the culture. They differ in that they consciously attempt to adapt cultural material to persons who are not of the group.”
3. Commercialized indigenous festivals: These are indigenous festivals that have been commercialized with the help of Chambers of Commerce, private promoters, and the tourist industry.
4. Non-community monocultural festivals: these monocultural festivals are “organized by persons from outside the culture presented, have no base of support from the cultural group depicted, and make no attempt to involve person of the culture as members of the audience.”
5. Multi-cultural folk arts festivals: these festivals present the cultural materials of many cultures to audiences who are not part of those cultures.

This model is useful because it addresses key concepts in programming, community participation, and the ways in which external forces can affect a festival. The community-centred approach to the model is useful for understanding the Douz Festival, since it is an event that is organized by and rooted in community-based practices. It is also important that Wilson and Udall articulate the idea that a festival can be an organic product of a society's cultural life and that a sense of community self-consciousness can be expressed through public festivity. In Chapter 4, I will explore how wedding festivities in Douz, practices that are the foundation of the town's cultural life, have been woven into the Douz Festival. Unfortunately, Wilson and Udall's model focuses solely on content, programmatic control, and audience, and ignores the issues of financial control, scope, and function.

Based on the typology above that is rooted in my fieldwork visits, I propose that musical events and festivity in Tunisia generally fit into one of these six categories: *spectacle*, *festival*, weddings, *zarda*, *hadhra*, and *soirée stambeli*. In this chapter I provide a detailed description of *spectacle* and *festival*—the civic, secular, and art-centred forms of festivity. In Chapter 4, I discuss the sacred and ritual forms— weddings, *zarda*, *hadhra*, and *soirée stambeli*. Figure 4 on the following page summarizes my typology and taxonomy of festivity in Tunisia.

Spectacle

Tunisians often use the French word *spectacle* to describe a musical, dance, or dramatic performance, or a show that combines two or more of these. A *spectacle* is typically two or three hours long, and may be a public performance or one intended for an intimate audience by invitation only. Although in other Francophone or Anglophone countries this type of event would be called a *concert*, Tunisians do not use this term. Public *spectacles* are not intended for tourists. They are open to the general public but with minimal publicity.

Figure 4. Typology and Taxonomy of Festivity in Tunisia.

<div><div>Taxonomy</div><div>Typology</div></div>	Spectacle	Festival	Weddings (ritual, not festive representations)	Zarda	Hadhra	Soirée Stambeli
<u>Sponsorship</u> Who funds the event?	non-profit organizations or private corporations	government, concert promotion enterprises or NGOs	families of the bride and groom; wedding guests	private; donations from attendees		private; donations from attendees
<u>Content</u> What types of acts? Openness to the world?	secular, religious themes possible yes	secular, religious themes possible yes	secular and sacred no	sacred no		sacred no
<u>Duration</u> Number of hours? Number of performances?	2-3 hours 1-3 performances	varies numerous performances over 1 day or many days	varies varies	varies 1 performance		varies 1 performance
<u>Cost</u> Ticket cost?	inexpensive or free	varies depending on event	free; donations made by attendees	free; donations accepted by performers		free; donations accepted by performers
<u>Audience</u> Who are the audience members?	general audience (Tunisian) or invitation only	general audience (Tunisian and tourist)	invited guests	local community		local community
<u>Function</u> Event purpose? Public or private? Sacred or secular?	artistic and social may be public or private secular	entertainment, artistic and social public sacred or secular	ritual, religious, social, entertainment private sacred	religious, social, entertainment public sacred		religious, social, entertainment public sacred

Tickets are inexpensive and sometimes even free because non-profit organizations and private corporations sponsor many of these events. Posters announcing the *spectacle* are mounted near the venue and the performers extend invitations to friends and family. These events are secular in nature, but often make use of sacred themes, images, and musical repertoires. When employed, sacred images evoke an element of Tunisia's cultural history and not a specific religious agenda.

Tunisian scholar and producer Mohamed Garfi, in his 2009 monograph *Musique et Spectacle: Le theater lyrique arabe esquisse d'un itinéraire (1847-1975)*, offers a brief description of the *spectacle* in Tunisia. He suggests that a myriad of sources have influenced this particular type of performance, including Adam de la Halle's thirteenth-century musical drama *Le Jeu de Robin et Marion*, Spanish *zarzuela*, Greco-Roman theatre, and Arab theatre, poetry and storytelling (Garfi 2009:23-28). Although the influences he suggests seem too broad chronologically and stylistically, the underlying premise appears to be that the Tunisian *spectacle* is a flexible genre that draws from a wide variety of Western and North African forms of entertainment.

One recent example of a public *spectacle* presented in Tunis highlights the influence of Western models on Tunisian productions. On the morning of Friday, 14 June 2013, my informant Hamza called to invite some Tunisian friends and myself to a new production in which he would be performing that night entitled *Sala*. This *spectacle*, with music, dance, and drama, was held at the *4ème Art Théâtre* in the centre of Tunis. Hamza, a 29-year old professional dancer and *stambeli* musician, was a leading dancer in the production. *Sala* depicted the emotional struggles faced by ordinary people trying to reconcile family life, work life, and technology using absurdist- and expressionist-style theatre, Western-style modern classical dance, and electronic music. There were three evening performances scheduled, one each on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday night. When I arrived for the Friday

night performance, the attendant at the box office directed me to enter the darkened theatre, which was filled. It appears that the *Théâtre National Tunisien* and the *Goethe-Institute* underwrote the production's expenses since their logos were prominently positioned on the posters and programmes. My informants suggested that sponsorships like this, especially from the *Théâtre National Tunisien*, are rare. Not only do they make it possible for artists to produce events in prominent venues, but they carry prestige and acknowledgement by the government of artistic achievement. Although we were issued tickets, they were free of charge. This public *spectacle*, like most, is an opportunity to present new artistic material to an interested audience.

Many of the audience members lingered in the theatre after the performance to discuss the production informally. It appeared that most of the attendees were middle- or upper-class Tunisians of all ages. My informants, and the audience members sitting near us, agreed that they enjoyed the production but were perplexed by some of the absurdist-inspired scenes—namely, one in which all the characters took turns sliding underneath long strips of burlap while techno dance music played in the background. They also confirmed that, like us, they attended because a cast member had invited them.

In contrast to the more formal events, during my fieldwork visits my informant Youssef would often arrange private *spectacles* in his home in the *medina*, the historic quarter of Tunis. He would invite friends and family to watch both rehearsed and impromptu performances by colleagues, some of whom were old friends and others new acquaintances. Musicians would perform traditional, classical or newly composed pieces, while others would lead the group in singing folkloric, religious, or *stambeli* songs. Dancers would take turns performing traditional numbers. Youssef would often take an opportunity to play the newest versions of his *stambeli*-infused blues melodies. The musicians always welcome the opportunity to try new repertoires and experiment with familiar ones. Even though everyone

was encouraged to sing and participate in some way, there was a clear distinction between the performers at the centre of attention and the audience seated along the perimeter of Youssef's living room. He would occasionally script, rehearse, and perform material with friends for private *spectacles* held in venues in Tunisian suburbs. His extended family would provide food and drink for these events as well. Sometimes they would offer simple fare such as fruit and soda, other times there would be complete meals. These private *spectacles* are understood as social gatherings—opportunities to share music and food and enjoy the company of friends and family. It is not uncommon for strangers and passers-by to be invited to share the food and entertainment; in Tunisian culture it is considered a *baraqa* (blessing) to have guests into your home.

Although money is never exchanged before, during, or after these private *spectacles*, I believe that a gift economy is at work. I suggest that these events and the food, drink, and entertainment associated with them can be understood as gifts from Youssef to his guests, although he would never describe them as such. In exchange, he hopes to secure connections to influential individuals associated with the Ministry of Culture and the entertainment industry, gain financial backing for public *spectacles*, and advance his status as an artist within his circle of family and friends. Marcel Mauss (1922) explains that there is no such thing as a “pure gift”; gifts articulate the honour, status, and power of both giver and receiver. Furthermore, societies rely on gift exchange to build and maintain social bonds; gifts are the physical representation of the bond between the giver and receiver. Godelier (1999) in response to Mauss's theory adds:

Presents used to be made between close friends and relatives, both as a consequence of and a testimony to the links binding them together; these imposed reciprocal relations on the participants, expressed by the exchange of gifts, given without “counting”, and above all without expecting anything in return. For the mark of the gift between close friends and relatives, then as now, is not the absence of obligations, it is the absence of “calculation” (Godelier 1999:5).

Informants appreciate Youssef's *spectacles*. An invitation demonstrates that Youssef is still actively engaged with Tunis's musical community, confirming his professional status and power. The invitation bestows an honour upon the recipient as well. It carries the message that Youssef thinks this guest is important and has social influence and power in some capacity, although Youssef told me in private that he does not expect favours from friends and relatives just because he invites them to his private *spectacles*. He has, however, talked about the social bonds that these *spectacles* are intended to reinforce, as Mauss and Godelier have described. Youssef hopes that these social gatherings remind people to "put in a good word for him" with government officials or corporate sponsors if the opportunity arises.

To summarize, neither public nor private *spectacles* are state-sponsored and in general, and they are not marketed to tourists. They are where culturally minded middle and upper class Tunisians go to experience new artistic ideas and renew social connections. The salient features of public *spectacles* in contemporary Tunisia are that they are not government sponsored, not part of a larger series of performances, and there is only one performance, although on rare occasions a second or third may be offered. Ticket prices vary and depend on the content and venue, but are generally affordable by most Tunisians. The producer and the artists are the financial stakeholders, and are the ones that profit from a successful event. What separates *spectacles* from other genres of festivity is that they primarily serve as "art for art's sake"; overt religious and political agendas are noticeably absent. Sharing many characteristics of public *spectacles*, private *spectacles* are more intimate venues to create "art for art's sake" and also opportunities to self-promote or increase exposure of the host's artistic activities. Although Tunisian audience members enjoy talking, singing, smoking, and dancing in their seats during most types of performances, *spectacles* are not participatory events. In larger venues there is a high degree of audience-performer separation, less in

smaller venues. They are fluid social events for friends and family to hear new and old music, socialize, and reinforce relationships that might influence professional or social standing.

Festival

Tunisians use the French word *festival* and the Arabic word *maharajan* interchangeably to describe events that are open to the public, and are sponsored by the ministry of tourism, the ministry of culture, a concert promotion enterprise, or an NGO. *Festivals* may include popular, Eastern classical, Western classical or folk genres, and may be sacred or secular. The month-long Carthage Festival receives the most financial support. Founded in 1963, this event presents nightly performances from the beginning of July to mid-August. Performances include popular singers, orchestral music, ballets, rap, poetry, and multimedia extravaganzas. Performers in recent festivals include Middle Eastern celebrities such as singers Kadhem Esseher and Marcel Khalifa, Tunisian stars such as Saber el-Robai and Dhafer Youssef, and international artists such as Alpha Blondy and Charles Aznavour. Because of the high ticket prices, most audience members are affluent Tunisians from the northern suburbs of Tunis. *Gradin*, or bench seating, for most concerts is TDN 10 (£4.25). *Chaise*, or standard seating, is TDN 30 (£12.75). Tickets for Charles Aznavour's 2009 concert were TDN 130 (£55.90). The high ticket prices at the Carthage Festival are the exception. In contrast, evening performances at the Hammamet Festival and the Douz Festival were TDN 5 (£2.15).

Although there are other prominent and well-funded state-supported *festivals* in Tunisia, the Carthage Festival receives the most support and publicity. Early in my fieldwork I consulted a staff member at the *Centre des Musiques Arabes et Méditerranéennes* (CMAM) regarding festivity in Tunisia. When I expressed my interest in *festivals*, particularly those in the south, he replied "the only *festival* worthy of research is the Carthage Festival; it is the premier *festival* in the country". This position is consistent with government propaganda; the

government promotes the *festival* as one of the country's most successful cultural endeavours because of the funding it receives and the income it generates. It also highlights the *festival's* stature amongst Tunis's intelligentsia and elite.

Like the *spectacle*, religious references and themes may be present at *festivals*. During the 2009 Carthage Festival, one of the featured performances was *Nafahat Soufiya*, or "Sufi Inspirations", a multi-media production with chorus, vocal soloists, orchestra, Middle Eastern instruments, and projected film clips, written and conducted by Mohammed Garfi. The production was Garfi's attempt to create a multi-sensory, historically-informed depiction of the role of Sufism in Tunisia. Although Tunisia is still mostly a secular state, religion is an integral part of public and family life. It is not surprising that religion is part of secular festivity too. Its presence informs the audience about a part of the culture without promoting Sufism as a religious practice.

In fact, a few religious institutions host *festivals* as well. Their *festivals* are secularized; the sacred ritual element is absent and the events are promoted as entertainment by the institutions and the media. Each May, the Sidi Belhasan *zaouia*, home of the Shadhili Sufi brotherhood in Tunis, hosts a two-day festival of sacred song. According to local discourse, the *zaouia* is the site where the 13th century Moroccan mystic Sidi Abu al-Hasan ash-Shadhili (locally known as Sidi Belhasan) prayed for decades before continuing on to a pilgrimage to Mecca. Singers, groups, and Sufi brotherhoods from all regions of Tunisia participate in this event. The festival is a long-standing and well-known one that attracts a wide variety of listeners—men and women, young and old alike. There is no admission charge. Despite that, attendance has dropped in recent years. Since the 2011 revolution, many Tunisians have been discouraged from going or have been turned away at the site. Despite the fact that the festival is intended as entertainment, conservative Islamists who object to the veneration of saints and what they consider to be the extra-Islamic practices that are part of

Sufism have protested the event. The presence of protestors and civil and military police has put a damper on it and reduced the number of attendees. Since the revolution, my informants have insisted that I avoid the festival because they fear violence could break out at any time at the *zaouia*.

A significant difference between *spectacles* and *festivals* is that *festivals* usually do not present cutting-edge, innovative acts. Garfi's *Nafahat Soufiya* was an exception. They are events that feature traditional, popular, sacred, and folkloric music to entertain both Tunisians and tourists. *Festivals* are often highlighted on tour groups' itineraries. Ultimately, it is the event's sponsor – the government, a non-governmental organization, or concert promotion business – that reaps the financial rewards from the event. Like *spectacles*, *festivals* are not participatory, and the degree of audience-performer separation depends on the venue.

Since this thesis focuses on the Douz Festival, it is important to explore how these descriptions of *festival* and *spectacle* are connected to the musical landscape of the town.

Festival in Douz

The Douz Festival is a classic example of a Tunisian *festival*. It is an extended event, with a celebratory ambiance that is open to all members of the community and tourists. Although it is open to the public, most of the attendees are residents of Douz. The challenges of getting to Douz and the inadequate tourism infrastructure in the south limit the number of international tourists. The Douz Festival is state sponsored. The cultural and tourism ministries provide most of the support, and because of this, most events are free. Money spent by the government on the festival stimulates tourism, which has a positive effect on the local economy. Tourists arrive in Douz and, over the four days of the festival, occupy the town's hotels, restaurants, cafés, museum, and shops and then make use of the local tour operators and camel drivers for excursions into the desert. For many sectors of the local economy, they are the most profitable four days of the year.

There are no cutting-edge, innovative performances at the Douz Festival. It consists mainly of performances of traditional, popular, sacred, and folkloric music to entertain Tunisians and tourists alike. Like *spectacles*, there may be religious references and symbols invoked at the Douz Festival, but it is not fundamentally a religious event. For example, my informant Abdelati described the festival scene during which a portable domed *zaouia* was paraded across the *Place H'nich*. *Zawa* (pl. of *zaouia*) have been part of the local landscape for centuries, as have the holy men that are memorialized by them. Abdelati explained that in context the *zaouia*'s appearance was not a religious statement, but solely a way of representing local history that is readily understood by Tunisians.

This festival is the only form of public festivity in Douz that is accessible to the entire community and visitors as well. It presents a moment for people to perform versions of themselves for the community and others. It opens a space for portraying identities through the staging of traditional Bedouin, sub-Saharan, and Arab music and dance. The residents of Douz believe these performances represent who they are—simultaneously Marazig, African, Arab, and Muslim. As I demonstrate in Chapter 7, international performers at the festival also allow the residents of Douz to situate their ideas about themselves in relationship to images of others. Overall, the festival is about the negotiation and performance of identity—what is means to be “of Douz.”

Spectacle in Douz

According to my informants, the only cultural event that takes place in Douz outside of wedding celebrations and the festival is the *spectacle* during Ramadan. Ramadan evenings in Douz are filled with festive meals and visiting with friends and family, as is the case throughout the Muslim world. My informants Zouhair, Hassan, and Aziz—three brothers in their twenties living with their mother and sister in the family compound in Douz—mentioned that since 2008, a nearby theatre company has produced a show for local

audiences during Ramadan. According to this family, the show is wildly popular even though it is the same every year. The show contrasts the life of the “city man” with that of the “Bedouin man”. The “city man” wears Western clothes, sings pop and rap songs, and extols the virtues of his lifestyle. The “Bedouin man” wears Bedouin clothes, sings Bedouin songs, and also extols the virtues of his lifestyle. At the beginning of the show, there is a scene depicting *hadhra*, the supererogatory Sufi rite. A man in Bedouin-style clothing (a long, woollen tunic) strikes his *bendir* (frame drum) while chanting “*Allah, Allah, Allah ...*”. Zouhair, Hassan, and Azziz thought this scene was hilarious and watched it repeatedly on the DVD of the show that they purchased from the media store in Douz. Although the brothers did not ally themselves with either character, they all agreed that the Bedouin man and his chant were silly because his practices are old-fashioned. This raises interesting questions about the practice and reception of Sufism in Douz, which will be discussed in Chapter 4. It demonstrates that Sufi practices and music do appear in Douz, although most citizens of Douz reject and ridicule Sufism and promulgate images of themselves as devout Sunni Muslims. It also indicates that the residents of Douz do not have an affinity for all representations of Bedouin-ness. As my informant Belgecem has suggested, the Marazig consider themselves to be modern Bedouins; they continue many of the same practices that were central to their grandfathers’ lives, while at the same time freely adopting others if they believe they will improve their quality of life.

Conclusion

As this chapter illustrates, public music-making is a complex and varied practice in Tunisia. The labels that Tunisians assign to different forms of festivity are not always clear and consistent. My consultants agreed that although all these genres of events are important, *festivals and spectacles* are the most significant to Tunisian cultural life.

It is important to note that *festivals* are the only form of public festivity that are regularly government-funded. Although *spectacles*, such as *Sala*, periodically obtain support from a government organization, this is rare. One informant stated that many individuals and groups apply to the Ministry of Culture requesting support for a wide variety of projects and events including *festivals* and *spectacles*; however, very few are given funding. He attributed this to the fact that the Cultural Minister is a bureaucrat, not an artist, and he is more interested in running his bureaucracy than funding the arts.

Undoubtedly, Tunisians would invite any visitor to any event; however, my informants have confirmed that *festivals* are the events most readily accessible to tourists. Although many *festivals* are mainly attended by the local community, such as the Douz Festival, they are the most touristic of the genres of festivity described in this chapter. *Festivals* get government funding and there is ample publicity from state agencies, namely the Ministry of Tourism.

Among the difference in music-making, some forms of festivity are more sacred than others. The ones discussed in this chapter, *festivals* and *spectacles*, are the least sacred. They are fundamentally secular forms that occasionally invoke religious images as a cultural reference, not as a religious rite. These might be representations of Tunisia's Sufi practices, stambeli rituals, *marabouts*, or Islamic heritage. Tunisians understand these as meaningful cultural symbols and, because of their repositioning in a secular frame, do not perceive them as offensive or blasphemous. In Chapter 4, I will discuss how *zarda* and *hadhra*-based events and *soirées stambelis* are hybrid forms. I suggest that they are secularized forms of sacred festivity. In their original contexts, all participants would consider these practices to be transformative sacred rituals. However, in contemporary settings—with a festive atmosphere and with the intention to entertain, not transform—most guests understand these as secular events. I will also explore weddings as festivity in Chapter 4, and demonstrate that real

weddings and the festival representations of them have profound religious and social meanings in Douz.

Chapter 4: Sacred and Ritual Forms of Festivity

Weddings, *hadhrat*, *zarady*, and *soirées stambelis* are central to the Tunisian musical landscape. This is especially true in southern Tunisia, where traditional, folkloric, and devotional music appears to be preferred over genres of Western popular music such as hip-hop, pop, rock, and jazz. In Douz, the outward rejection of mystical practices and, at the same time, the inclusion of Sufi music in wedding celebrations suggests an ambivalence regarding Sufism and mysticism that is not part of local discourse. This is especially important since weddings practices are essential components of the Douz Festival. In this chapter I examine sacred and ritual forms of festivity, including weddings, in order to better understand the Douz Festival and the performances that comprise it. I will start with the most sacred events, discussing those that fall in between sacred and secular—the ones that are most difficult to categorise in terms of my typology—at the end of the chapter.

Of particular concern in this chapter is the music associated with Sufi and maraboutic communities in the *Nefzaoua*, a region of southwest Tunisia that is bound to the north by the Chareb, Segui, and Berda Mountains, to the west by the Chott Jerid salt lake, to the south by Great Erg Oriental (the Tunisian section of the Sahara Desert), and to the east by the Dhahar Plateau (Sghaier 1999:2)(see Figures 5 and 6, page 93). The three largest towns in the region are Tozeur, Kebili, and Douz. In most towns in the *Nefzaoua*, and in Tunis, citizens are predominantly Sunni Muslims yet they fully acknowledge Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Sufi, European, and African heritages as accepted parts of Tunisian culture. In Douz, however, citizens embrace a different form of Sunni identity. It is one that emphasizes the town's Bedouin heritage, adheres to conservative Sunni ideologies, and rejects Sufism and maraboutism. This plays out in musical life. Although elements of Sufi practices, such as the singing of *Burda*—a song extolling the virtues of the Prophet Mohamed—are found in Douz,

the connections of these practices to Sufism are overlooked. A detailed description of *Burda* appears later in this chapter.

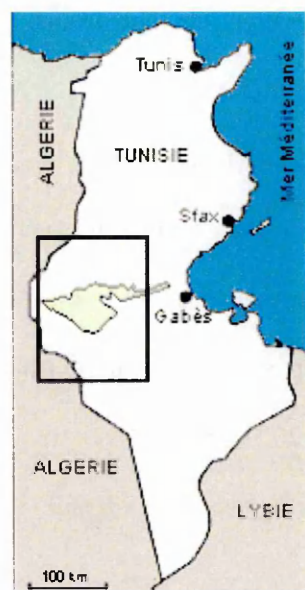


Figure 5. Map of Nefzaoua¹



Figure 6. Major towns of Nefzaoua (Google Maps)²

Weddings

Weddings are important social and cultural events, and fascinating opportunities to experience local food, fashion, large family gatherings, and music. On 2 June 2010, after a *zokra* lesson, my teacher Habib and his sons Skander and Tareq insisted that I go to a wedding with them. It was the first one of the season, and Skander and Tareq’s band would be playing. Their band consists of three hand-drummers, one keyboardist, a lead singer, and a backup singer who doubles on hand-drums. At 10:15 pm, Habib and I left for a *nejma* celebration (the high point of the nuptial festivities held on the second evening of the wedding) at the *Salon de Mariage*, the site of many weddings in Douz. It is a two-acre plot of land about three kilometres from the centre of town, in a residential neighbourhood flanked by two partially constructed buildings that are essentially two large concrete walls.

¹ <http://dole-douz.pagesperso-orange.fr/origine.htm>

² Qibili is one of the many alternate spellings of Kebili.

Outdoor weddings are common throughout Tunisia. When we arrived at 10:30 pm, the band was setting up, and some guests, mainly older men and young boys, had arrived early to enjoy the anticipatory ambiance. Near the band there was a small pit with a fire. The drums were lined up against the edge of the fire to keep them regulated and in tune.

Habib introduced me to countless friends and relatives, including Mostfa, the *raques* for this wedding celebration and one of many *raquesoun* (pl.) in Douz. A *raques*, derived from the Arabic word “*raqs*” (dance), is a costumed male dancer who encourages wedding attendees to dance and give money to the groom’s family in order to pay for the wedding (the *raques*, the musicians, etc.). Any money left over, usually about TDN 200 (£90), is given to the newlyweds. By 11:00 pm, the band started playing, more and more guests arrived, and the *raques* started to dance in the centre of the *salon* amongst the men.

Many informants stated that, several generations ago, a rug was placed in a central location and people would throw coins (small denominations, 20, 50 or 100 millims; approximately 1p, 2p and 5p) onto the rug in order to pay for the privilege to dance with the *raques*. Now, males guests write their name and their “pledge” on a piece of paper (usually for 500 millims or TDN 1), roll it up, and tuck it in fold on top of the *raques*’s hat. Periodically, the *raques* would leave the centre of the *salon* to remove the papers, and return to start all over again. The money is collected at the end of the wedding. My informants assured me that guests always pay what they have pledged.

The *raques* wears the typical costume also worn by drum and *zokra* players during weddings and festive events—a white button-down shirt, a white skirt, a red or white waistcoat, a red and yellow striped sash, and a red *chechia* (fez) with a long black tassel. Habib said that it is the customary Bedouin costume for musicians and dancers. He said the same costume has been used for generations, and is the customary Bedouin attire.

All my informants agreed that there are many *ragesoun* in Douz. They are all well known and much loved. One informant suggested that having a joyful and gregarious disposition is a prerequisite for the job. While we were waiting for the wedding to begin, children and adults alike went up to Mostfa to greet him, kiss him, and exchange pleasantries.

As a crowd gathered, more people began dancing with the *rages*. Some guests, usually young children, would go to the far end of the *salon* to buy roasted nuts from a vendor stationed at the salon. As time went on, the division of the sexes became more apparent. Men stood on the left side (from the view of the band), and women sat on the right. Young children and girls stay with the women; boys join the men starting around age six. The women were well dressed in festive clothes and jewellery; the men wore jeans and t-shirts. The band played songs by Umm Kulthum, Mohamed Hassan, Amina Fakhret, and other classical and popular artists.

Over time, a “front line” of young men moved towards the centre and would dance with the *rages* and give him money. At the centre of the line was the groom. Friends and family members drifted up to the front line to congratulate him and dance with him. A pot of incense was delivered to the *salon*, and some people danced with it as it was making its way to the centre. At one point a young man danced his way through the centre of the *salon* carrying fireworks.

At 11:30 pm, the *rages* stopped the music and dancing, women ululated³, and the *rages* made a brief announcement. The distortion from the microphone prevented the attendees from hearing the message, but it did not seem to bother anyone. The music and dancing quickly resumed. Shortly thereafter, a small group of very young girls started

³ According to Jafran Jones, “ululation is an exclusively female vocalization typical of Middle Eastern, African, and (to some extent) southern European women. It is produced with a high-pitched, loud voice, accompanied by rapid movement of the tongue and the uvula. (The right hand is usually extended horizontally over the upper lip.)” (Jones 2001:430).

performing the *nakh* (hair dance) at the front of the women's section—I will offer a further discussion of the *nakh* below. At 12:15 am, although the celebration was going strong, Habib suggested that we had seen everything and that it was time to leave.

Many of my informants in Douz shared the opinion that although the residents of Douz enjoy seeing and participating in weddings, they are becoming less common. Belgecem claims that the long-standing concepts of marriage are waning; the practices of girls marrying at fifteen, couples having six to twelve children, and living with parents, grandparents or other relatives are disappearing. He said that now people live together without getting married, have children out of wedlock, and the nuclear family model is replacing the extended family model. The main focus of the modern family is earning money, not tradition, love or happiness.

In Tunis, and in most of the north, weddings are half-day events. Many couples and their families go to the town hall, sign the required paperwork and then have a small reception. In both the north and the south, the groom's family makes all of the major decisions, including the selection of music, and most of the financial burden is theirs as well.

On the first day of a traditional wedding in the south, the couple and their immediate families go to the town hall and sign the wedding certificate. There might be a small reception with cake afterwards. During the first night of celebrations, *henna*, there is music and dancing at the groom's house and a celebration at the bride's house during which the women apply henna to their hands and feet. The afternoon of the second day is *rammi*, from the verb "to throw", when traditionally money would be thrown at the couple. During *rammi*, a token dowry and the nuptial clothing bought by groom's family are ceremoniously transported from the groom's house to the bride's house. A *zokra* and drum band leads the procession of family members through the streets. During the evening of the second day, *nejma* (stars), there is a celebration with music and dancing that includes the bride and

groom's family and friends. As at the wedding in Douz, the sexes are separated and the groom is in the front row of men. All the other men dance with him and congratulate him throughout the evening. A colourful carpet is set up at the rear of the women's section. This is where the bride is seated. She is elaborately and protectively dressed in special wedding attire. Toward the end of the evening, the groom approaches the bride and symbolically takes henna from her hand (no one was able to explain to me why this happens). During the third day, *jeffa*, the bride travels by camel from her parent's house, loops around the gravesite of the local *marabout*, and then proceeds to the grooms' house, which will become her new home. In the early twentieth century, family and friends would wait for the display of the nuptial bed linen the following morning, but my informant Belgecem said that this practice is disappearing.

Not all rituals are observed at every wedding; they can vary to a certain degree yet still remain traditional. This is illustrated by my experience in December 2010 (on the second day of the Douz Festival), when my informant Moez frantically called me and insisted that I join him in going to a pre-wedding celebration. I met him at the house of the bride's father, Moez's wife's uncle. A group of thirty men had gathered to slaughter a sheep and a goat and prepare the meat for the oven. There was no music, no dance, no sign of the groom, just idle chatter about family, cars, and motorbikes. Although I had not experienced this type of wedding celebration elsewhere, Moez explained that this type of gathering is not unusual before a wedding.

Two days later I got another frantic call from Moez explaining that it was time for the big celebration of the same wedding. I was treated to a quick couscous dinner before heading out to the wedding venue, which was the neighbourhood outdoor wedding site near the bride's family's house. That evening's wedding celebration was for *nejmi*. Because I arrived with Moez, and he was helping set up the venue, I was able to witness the gradual

development of the evening. Around 8:00 pm, members of the various performing groups started to arrive and unpack their equipment. This consisted of drums, microphones, amplifiers, speakers, and stands. By 9:00 pm, the equipment was ready and guests began to arrive. Men of all ages stood and sat to the left of and behind the amps, speakers, and microphones. Women sat on blankets on the ground to the right of the equipment. Behind them was a large concrete wall adorned with a colourful drape, which would be the bride's spot for the evening. By 9:15 pm, the music began.

Compared to my other experiences, this was an opulent wedding. There were five performing groups and a table with water and soft drinks for approximately three hundred guests. I recognized almost all of the groups from their performances at the Douz Festival. One group, Gougou de Zarzis, had travelled three hours from the seaside town of Zarzis to play at the wedding. They are one of the most celebrated folkloric groups in the south and their appearance at the wedding suggested that the family had a high social standing and the means to pay for their presence. One of my informants commented that the bride's father is a skilled horseman and knows all of the folkloric groups, so it was easy for him to ask them to play for his daughter's wedding. I asked my informants if the number of performers indicated wealth. Indirectly, they said yes. They explained that there are many wealthy people in Douz now, but some like to "show off".

The musical groups, *zokra* and drum bands took turns playing, and sometimes performed together. Each group was accompanied by the *rages*. The bride's aunt, the only woman allowed in the centre, was charged with maintaining the large pot of burning incense. Many of the men took the pot and danced with it. The incense is considered a blessing and a protection from the evil eye (see Maloney 1976). Halfway through the evening a *boussadia* arrived, doing his usual dance and attempting to scare the children. It was midnight when Moez signalled that most of the festivity was over, and that it would be a good time to leave.

The *Nakh*

Not all practices are performed at all weddings. Although I had briefly witnessed the *nakh* (women's hair dance) during the 2008 and 2009 festivals and on festival videos, I only saw it at the wedding in Douz in June 2010. During the *nakh*, between ten and twenty young women sit on the ground and swing their hair in circle patterns rhythmically to music. My informant Saif stated that the popularity of the *nakh* is fading, but it is still seen at some weddings and festive events. He explained that the mothers of the dancers stand behind their seated daughters; they assume this position as a display of pride in their daughters. Saif claimed that the dance is done out of joy and happiness, and, to a certain extent, to attract men to the unmarried women who are performing. He said that the dance is customarily done for an audience of women, but men are permitted to watch sometimes.

My informant Belgecem elaborated on Saif's explanation and claimed that the *nakh* is performed by married and unmarried women at weddings and festive events. He stated that women's hair, especially long hair, is considered to be a beautiful feature of the body and the *nakh* is celebration of beauty, not sexuality. Belgecem claimed that the *nakh* is not erotic⁴; he added that overt public displays of sexuality are absent from and forbidden in Arab culture.

Throughout the Arab world, women's hair is a complex religious, sexual, and political symbol (see Delaney 1994:163). In Tunisia, like in many other parts of the Arab world, a woman's hair is highly treasured mark of beauty (see Abu-Lughod 1999:194). Many authors and ethnographies have demonstrated that women's hair is considered highly erotic and an object of sexual desire in the Middle East (Zujur 1992; Delany 1994; El Guindi 1999; Shirazi 2001; Ciucci 2008; Kahf 2008; Zahedi 2008). This eroticization of hair appears to be absent in Douz.

⁴ I use the term erotic here in the vernacular sense, not as it is used in critical texts.

Belgecem and many other informants in Douz vehemently reject the idea that a woman's hair has sexual connotations. Most women in Douz wear a *hijab* (pl. *hujub*), a veil that covers the head and chest when they are outside of the home. Girls start wearing the *hijab* at the onset of puberty, although in some families girls begin wearing it earlier. During my fieldwork visits, most women in Douz (informants and wives, daughters and other female relatives of informants) removed their *hujub* in my presence while I was in their homes, after our initial introduction. At first this surprised me since I was complete stranger, an American, and was traveling alone. Belgecem pointed out that the wearing of the veil in Douz is primarily an expression of modesty as articulated by Islam. It is a religious practice and a marker of identity; it articulates to the community that the wearer wants to be seen as a devout Muslim. He stated that if hair was understood as a sexual object, the women in Douz would remain veiled all the time in my presence to order to avoid the possibility of heightening sexual tension between us. Lastly, Belgecem explained that women wear the *hijab*, and men the *chech* (Bedouin scarf fashioned into a turban), for practical reasons as well; they are useful as protection against the sun and sand.⁵

As part of President Bourguiba's initiative to modernize Tunisia after independence, women's rights were guaranteed under the Personal Status Code of 1955. Part of the code

⁵ Despite the association of the *hijab* with Islam, Gertrude Stern (1939:108), Henry Hansen (1967:71), and Nikki Keddie (2007: 22-3) have argued that there is no evidence of veiling among Arabs at the time of Muhammad. According to Kahf and Keddie, there are two passages from the Qur'an (verses 33:59 and 24:30-31) that customarily are interpreted to advocate veiling. Both suggest veiling for both men and women to promote chaste behaviour and as a part of personal morality (Kahf 2008:29; Keddie 2007:22). Keddie suggests however that *hijab* in this context does not indicate a head and body covering, as it later came to mean, but it specifically refers to a curtain meant to "provide domestic comfort and privacy for the female elite of Islam" (Keddie 2007: 22). In particular, the reference in verse 33:55, mentions the *hijab* as a curtain to mark the elite status of the Prophet Muhammad's wives (ibid.). Verse 24:30 advises women to "draw their cloaks close about them when they go out" for safety and modesty's sake, but there is no mention of a face veil (ibid.). According to Keddie, this verse was later interpreted to suggest that the body, face, and hair should be covered (ibid.).

included the elimination of social policies deemed antiquated as well as veiling. According to Perkins, “Bourguiba believed that old-fashioned clothing encouraged old-fashioned modes of thinking and acting” (Perkins 2004:137). Bourguiba actively discouraged the wearing of the *hijab*. In the year after independence, he described it as an “odious rag” in numerous speeches and went so far as to outlaw it in the classroom (Moulby 1988:593; Perkins 2004:137). In 1984, the Tunisian government banned the wearing of the *hijab* and women were pulled off of the street for wearing it. (Kahf 2008:35). The trend for women to start wearing the *hijab* again started in the 1990s (ibid.). For most women, the decision to wear the *hijab* today is a personal one based on many factors, including but not limited to economic, political or family reasons (ibid.:39).

As this evidence indicates, women’s hair and the exposure of it has a contested history in Tunisia. Although some of the scholarly sources suggest the sexual nature of hair and *nakh*, I argue that, given the history of hair and the *hijab* in Tunisia and my informants’ accounts, *nakh* is genuinely understood in Douz as a joyous dance and celebration of femininity (See Al Zayer 2004:65).

Another perspective on the *nakh* came from a noted Douz celebrity, Belgacem Abdellatif. Belgacem is an internationally known poet, coordinator of the annual poetry symposium held during the Douz Festival, and is the curator of the Museum of the Sahara in Douz. He stated that the *nakh* is an Arab-Bedouin dance found throughout the Arab world, from Morocco to Iraq. The tempo of the dance varies widely from region to region. The speed is determined by the poetry that it corresponds to, called *msadis*. Neither Abdellatif nor other informants were able to describe the form or nature of *msadis*.

Many of my informants had not heard of the *nakh*, and those who knew about it—both men and women—were not very familiar with it. Some women did not ever remember performing it and no one was aware of the accompanying poetic form. As with many other

practices, familiarity is directly related to family tradition. Those families that have surviving elders nearby to teach these practices continue them. I believe that practice of *nakh* at nuptial celebrations is waning because there are fewer traditional weddings taking place in Douz. However, it is still performed at the Douz Festival. As Belgecem and other informants stated, it is public expression of feminine beauty and the Bedouin ethos (the latter is a concept that I will discuss in Chapter 5). These are all important, I argue, to the *raison d'être* of the Douz Festival—to articulate identity. The *nakh* serves as a symbol of Bedouin-ness and wedding traditions in Douz. Weddings are important to the social fabric in Douz because they affirm social and family relationships and the value of religion in everyday life.

Araasa and Henna

Some family practices appear to be more unique than others. One morning in early January 2012, one of my informants, Lamjun, invited me to an *araasa* in a café in the centre of Douz. Lamjun is a twenty-eight year-old construction worker and tour guide. Lamjun knows I am interested in local customs, and often invites me to weddings, parties, and special events. Before that morning, I had never heard of an *araasa*.

My informants Belgecem and Saif stated that the purpose of *araasa* is to get the groom out of the house before the wedding. At the family home, many women will be gathering to get ready for the wedding and prepare food. Belgecem stated that getting him out of the house prevents inappropriate contact with women before the wedding, which could bring shame to his family. Saif stated that in the past *araasa* often included dangerous games of risk, physical strength, and masculinity (horseplay). He added that sometimes the men drink alcohol during *araasa* and that sometimes it may last for several days.

In contemporary Douz, *araasa* is part of the wedding festivities and is a small celebration held in the morning for the groom and his friends. There is a DJ, pop music, dancing, and a videographer. In Douz, *araasa* can be held during any and every morning of a

traditional wedding celebration. Most often, it is held in the morning before the signing of the wedding contract, which happens later in the day at the town hall. Male friends greet the groom, dance, and leave money in a plate to help cover the expenses.

An informant in Tunis, Amel, a twenty-six year old graduate student studying communications, explained that sometimes in Tunis, men have a similar gathering for the first night of the wedding celebration, called *henna arous*. Like the women's *henna* gathering at the same time, it features decorative application of henna to the hands of the members of the wedding party and guests (see Vonderheyden 1934).

The *Boussadia*

Although a detailed description of the *boussadia* will be provided in Chapter 6, I will describe here my encounter with Moncef, the *boussadia* of Douz. *Boussadias* are masked and costumed street performers who appear at weddings and festive events. Moncef is fifty-four years old, and started performing as the *boussadia* when he was seventeen; this has been his sole profession. He said that there are other *boussadias* at the Douz Festival from other cities, like Kebili and Medinine, but he is the only *boussadia* for weddings in Douz.

Moncef said that he is especially busy during the peak wedding season of June, July and August, save *Ramadan*, and sometimes later in the year. He showed me his 2010 diary and he had a wedding appearance scheduled nearly every day of the summer. He said that even though it is customary to have a *boussadia* at a wedding, some families decide to do without. Moncef claimed that the *boussadia* is for fun, to make people laugh, and for entertainment. The *boussadia* is meant to scare children, but after a while, they realize he is not scary and it makes them laugh. Moncef said that the bride's family pays for the *boussadia*, and the groom's family contributes as well, though most other informants disagreed with this and suggested that the opposite is true (that is to say the groom's family pays the bulk of the cost and the bride's family may contribute a little).

Some informants added other anecdotes about the *boussadia*. Belgecem stated that the purpose of the *boussadia* at weddings is to detract unwanted “evil eye” glances away from the bride and groom. This is accomplished by putting the *boussadia* at the centre of the festivities. Belgecem stated that the *boussadia* often tries to sneak into venues, either in disguise, or under a blanket or sheet on a horse. Belgacem Abdellatif claimed that the *boussadia* used to only appear at weddings; his appearance at festive events is a recent addition. All my informants agreed, however, that you cannot have a *boussadia*, or for that matter, a real traditional wedding, without a *zokra*.

Zokra and Weddings

Zokra players and *zokra* and drum bands are important features of traditional weddings. My informant Moez explained that weddings are the centre of the social life in town. Anis, a fifty-eight year old school administrator, stated that *zokra* bands are critical to the festival since the *zokra* is a symbol of weddings, and marriage is an affirmation of societal norms and values of Islam. Belgecem, in response to Anis’s comment, added that marriage is important symbolically because, “[it] is the completion of religion through [sexual relations], a physical relationship, children and family life, and stability. It completes the religion.”

Abdelati explained that the *zokra* and the costume worn by its players are very old and came from Turkey. They were introduced during the reign of the Husaynid Dynasty of Beys in Tunisia between 1705 and 1957. The *zokra* has since been adopted as a nationwide cultural symbol, not just a representation of the south or the Bedouins.

I asked Abdelati if there were any sub-Saharan influences in the history of *zokra* bands and their repertoire. He said they were not African but were adopted by sub-Saharan Africans. Having said that, Abdelati continued by explaining that the drum used is African in origin and symbolizes the human heartbeat as well as the pace of the camel walking through

the desert. He said that drums are important to Islam because they were used to welcome the Prophet Muhammad when he made his legendary journey from Medina to Mecca.

Additionally Abdelati stated that *zokra* and drums are synonymous with marriage in Douz. Marriage, he stated, signifies the start of a new life. It is the door from one life to another, from single to married life. He claimed that marriage is a universal phenomenon, and it preserves every culture's traditions, not just local Islamic ones in Douz. I discuss the role of *zokra* band at weddings in Chapter 5.

Wedding Repertoire

Since Habib, Skander, and Tareq all play for weddings, I thought it would be easy to learn about the standard wedding repertoire. The opposite was true. Several times during several fieldwork visits, and using different questions, I tried to ascertain what gets played at weddings. Both Habib and Skander claimed that they play contemporary pop songs for weddings, including "*Ala Allah*" by the legendary singer of Douz, Belgacem Bouguenna, and "*Habibi Habibi*", by the Libyan singer-songwriter Mohamed Hassan. Skander said that any pop song about love or marriage is suitable, as are most songs by legendary Egyptian singer Umm Kulthum. He added that the young women like "*Hellalila*" by Belgacem Bouguenna in particular because it has the right tempo and rhythm for *nakh*.

None of my informants in the South were able to answer my specific questions about wedding repertoire except Amel in Tunis. Although this chapter focuses on rituals in Douz and the *Nefzaoua*, fieldwork done in Tunis helped me understand the wedding repertoire in southern Tunisia. My informants in Douz stated that the songs Amel discussed with me are also part of the core repertoire in the south. In May 2013, Amel and I were watching a video of the recent wedding of a mutual Tunisian friend, Fawzi, and his American wife Lisa. Because of financial and time constraints they condensed all of the wedding celebrations into

one day. Amel began describing the sequence of events that provided an opportunity to ask about repertoire.

Amel explained that many popular, folkloric, and traditional songs can be used for weddings. Typically, songs about love and marriage, as well as religious songs, are likely candidates. Songs about the Prophet Muhammad are commonly used too. Contemporary singers, especially Ziad Gharsa, Hédi Donia, and Hédi Tounsi, are celebrated for their renditions of these melodies. The first song played at Fawzi and Lisa's wedding was "*Inzed Nabi*", which, according to Amel, extols the virtues of the Prophet Muhammad and is often one of the first songs played at any wedding celebration. The next song was "*Aselama jiti*", or, "Welcome Bride". It was followed by another song celebrating the Prophet Muhammad, "*Allahu Sali An Nabi*". "*Megyas*", made famous by the folkloric Tunisian singer Ziad Gharsa, followed it. This song evokes images of traditional Tunisian weddings through the image of the *megyas*, a piece of jewellery customarily worn by brides. A *debke*, or Middle Eastern line dance, is usually played next. *Debkes* are usually associated with Lebanon and Palestine; however, they are found throughout the Arab world (see Rowe 2011). According to Amel, each region and family will select a *debka* based on where their family came from and what their family's tradition is. The two other standard wedding songs are "*Ala Asser Wel Kamun*" and "*Sidi Ali Azzouz*". The latter, a song praising the *marabout* Sidi Ali Azzouz, is from the repertoire of the Sulamiya Sufi brotherhood. Selections from Sufi repertoires appear in wedding celebrations without being identified as such. This is seen in Douz with the singing of the *Burda* at the end of the wedding celebrations.

Burda

My informant Hassan in Douz had arranged for himself, his brothers Zouhair and Aziz, and two friends to sing *Burda* for me in June 2011 (additional information on *Burda* appears below). He explained *Burda* as the song performed by the groom and his friends just

prior to the consummation of a marriage, at the end of the wedding festivities. Hassan said that friends greet the groom in his new house and then they escort him into the bedroom singing this song. He suggested that the text of the song asks *Allah* for a good marriage, everlasting love, many children, and a happy life. After the marriage is consummated, the groom returns to his friends, who are waiting outside to congratulate him. Often the bride joins her friends and family for similar congratulations.

I asked Hassan how he learned of this, and if his father had taught him. He laughed, and said no. He said that his friend Haykel, performing along with his brothers that evening, is the self-proclaimed local master of the *Burda*. When I asked Haykel how he learned the *Burda*, he replied, from a widely available commercially produced cassette. He added that it is not something you learn at home or at school, although it might be in the Marzougi's book on Marazig traditions.

I thought it was noteworthy that Haykel, the purported expert on *Burda*, is black. My informant Belgecem, and others, has said on many occasions that the master musicians in Tunisia have been black. Additionally, the most respected *zokra* player (and musician) in Douz, Mohamed Ben Bechir, is black. Belgecem states that Arabs are not perceived of as highly skilled musicians, even though there is a long history of music making in the Arab world. During my discussions with Bechir of Kebili about how black Africans have been drawn to the Aïssâwa Sufi community, he paraphrased the 14th century philosopher Ibn Khaldoun who said, "blacks dance because the heat is trapped in their bodies and heads." The discourse on blackness, music, and dance appears to be pervasive in the north and the south; I will explore blackness in greater detail in Chapter 6.

I asked other informants in Douz about *Burda*. Belgecem said that *Burda* is an extended poem about the Prophet Muhammad, written posthumously, and then set to music. A survey of Islamic studies literatures confirmed Belgecem's statement (Badawi, 1971,

Mutiso 2004, Allen and Richards 2006, Stetkevych 2006, 2007, and 2010). Additionally, Belgecem said it is sung at the Prophet's birthday, weddings, funerals, celebrations held when a person returns from *haji*, at *zarda* for the local *marabouts* Ghouth and Majhoub, and probably at *Dahlia* (as described later in this chapter). My informants stated that *Burda* is performed at some, but not all weddings. They added that the choice to sing it is made by groom's family, since the consummation of the marriage would take place at the groom's family house. One informant claimed that the decision is usually based on family tradition. Aziz showed me his own wedding DVD during a visit in May 2013 and it included a performance of *Burda*, just as he and his brothers and friends performed it two years before.

Burda, known by its full name *Qasidat al-Burah* (Mantle Ode), was written by the 13th century Egyptian poet Sharaf al-Din Abu 'Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Said al-Busiri. It is the best-known poem praising the Prophet Muhammad, and the most famous poem in the Arabic language (Stetkevych 2010:70). Al-Busiri was actively involved in the Shadhiliyyah Sufi order, and the poem is often sung by Sufis with mystical intent. Stetkevych confirms Belgecem's claim that *Burda* is sung at the Prophet's birthday, Friday *jumma* prayer, and funerals and adds, "the uses vary from location to location and no doubt have varied over time" (ibid.). Even though the presence of Sufi influences in Douz is denied, local practices, such as the singing of *Burda* at weddings, suggests their influence there.

Beyond Douz, the reception of Sufism and maraboutism is very different. In the following section I explore *hadhra*- and *zarda*-based events and how they fit into the continuum of festivity in Tunisia.

Hadhra and *Zarda*-Based Events

The next category of festivity to be considered here consists of events based on *zarda* and *hadhra* practices and derived from religious rituals outside of Sunni Islam. These are largely devotional rituals rather than rites of passage. Traditionally, *zarda* has been described

as a religious gathering that includes the annual pilgrimage to a saint's tomb, the ritual sacrifice of an animal, and the consumption of its meat (Puig 2004:50, 77). Music is often an integral part of the *zarda* (see Ferchiou 1971 and 1973). This particular form of festivity has been abandoned in many parts of Tunisia because of its association with Sufism and pre-Islamic religions. *Hadhra* is the general term used to describe the supererogatory rituals of Sufi orders. The most common form is *dhikr*, or "remembrance", during which Sufi initiates recite litanies and *suwar* from the *Quran* in order to get closer to *Allah*. Like *zarda*, *hadhra* has become less common in Tunisia because of the expansion of conservative Islamist ideology within the Tunisian government. However, there is a one-day *festival* near Douz that evokes elements of both *hadhra* and *zarda*.

Sufism in Douz

According to my informant Belgecem, Sufi and Jewish communities existed in Douz until Tunisia gained independence from France in 1956. He stated that they left for other towns in the south and throughout the country shortly after the departure of the French and that there appears to be no explanation for this migration. As described in Chapter 1, Julius states that Tunisian Jews left for France in 1966 after riots broke out in Tunis after the Israeli victory in the Six Day War (Julius 2005:57). None of my other informants mentioned this, and most of them insisted that Sufism had no place in Douz. This proved not to be true. However, rather than acknowledging any connection to Sufism, there is a strong tendency for citizens to portray themselves as modern semi-nomadic Bedouins who are descendants of pious Sunni Muslims from the East.

The following demonstrates the secretive nature of Sufism in Douz. During a visit to Douz in May 2011, a man started talking to me at a mobile book fair. It is unusual to have a fair like this in Douz, and even more unusual to see an American at one. The man introduced himself as Karim, a fifty-two year old primary school teacher in town. He was interested to

hear about my research and volunteered to introduce me to an acquaintance who is familiar with the Qadiriya brotherhood in Douz.⁶ He told me that the brotherhood is a very small (just five men) and secretive group, since Sufism is not popular in Douz. We agreed to meet at a café in the centre of town later that week to talk to his acquaintance.

Arranging a visit with Karim and his acquaintance proved to be an impossible task. He gave me many excuses for the difficulties—travel plans, mobile phone problems, and general communication issues. Ultimately, we met to discuss a meeting with Karim's acquaintance. Karim instructed me not to ask any questions when we did meet this acquaintance. He said he would ask questions about the focus of the Qadriya order and their practices himself, as if he wanted to join. He would then direct the information to me. He said his acquaintance would probably be agreeable to that.

In the end, this meeting never happened. I asked Karim how he found out about the Qadiriya. He responded that he believes that his late father (who also was a primary school teacher) was a member. The practices he performed match those of the Qadiriya. Karim said that his father refused to discuss the order or the practices, and denied any association with the brotherhood. He stated that his Qadiriya acquaintance is a friend of his father.

I suspected that Karim himself is a member of the Qadiriya brotherhood and he was using the story of his "acquaintance" to protect his identity and determine my reaction. My informant Saif and I both suspected he saw me as a potential recruit. I also believe that he created communication and scheduling obstacles to test my sincerity. In the end, I think, he divulged some information because of my persistence. Saif was present for many of my conversations with Karim and did say, without qualification, that he thinks Karim is a

⁶ The Qadiriya Sufi order, founded in Iran the twelfth century by Abdul-Qadir Jilani, is known for its emphasis on the fundamental practices of Islam.

knowledgeable man with reliable information. This was significant given Saif's suspicion of all mystical practices.

My suspicion that Karim is a part of the brotherhood was confirmed during one of our conversations. He described, in detail, the supererogatory practices of the order. Karim stated that the practices follow Sunni Islam very closely. In addition to *salat*, the five-times-a-day prayer, daily practice consists of the recitation of:

1. 120 repetitions of *La illahi illah la* (There is no God but God)
2. 100 repetitions of *Alla huma salli allah wa alla sayidinna muhammed wa aalihi wa salem* (May God bless our master Muhammad and his companions, and may peace be upon them)
3. 100 repetitions of *Al-latif* (The compassionate, one of the 99 names of *Allah*)
4. 100 repetitions of *Istaghfir allah* (Forgive me, *Allah*)
5. 100 repetitions of *Subhanna allah* (Glory to *Allah*)
6. 100 repetitions of *Subhanna allah wa hamdullilah wa la ilaha il allah, allahu akbar wa la howla wa lahu ata illa billay* (Glory be to *Allah*, and all praise be to *Allah*, and there is nothing but *Allah*, *Allah* is great, and there is no means nor force, only *Allah's* will)
7. The "Ayat Al-Kursi" passage (2:255) from the *Quran*

Additionally, from the *Quran* they recite Sura Al-Mulk (Tabaraka) (67), Al-Waqiah (56), and Ya Sin (36) on Sunday and Wednesday evenings. Without explanation, Karim was not willing to discuss the musical aspects of the order's practices.

I asked my informant Belgecem about the Qadiriya in Douz, and he confirmed that they exist in Douz, but added that they are not part of the mainstream and are removed from society. After telling him about my encounters with Karim he said, "I will not allow you to enter my house again if you join the Qadiriya." That was the end of the discussion and reinforced my perception that the citizens of Douz do not approve of Sufism.

Other Forms of Mysticism: Maraboutism in Tozeur

In Tozeur, a ninety-minute drive northwest of Douz, there are vibrant Qadiriya and Ismailiya⁷ Sufi brotherhoods and a small community that venerates the black *marabout* Sidi

⁷ A brotherhood founded in Persia in the 8th century AD by Muhammed bin Ismail.

Marzoug—the forefather of the Marazig of Douz. These groups flourished in the years before the 2011 revolution because of the steady stream of tourists into Tozeur; the town has an airport and a well-developed tourism industry. The Sidi Marzoug community is well known for its *banga*, a form of maraboutic *hadhra* featuring drums, *shqashiq*, and ecstatic singing. Although the town’s residents respect these groups and their rites, not everyone appreciates *banga*. As one restaurant owner stated in reference to the community’s practices, “there is no good music in Tozeur.” Unlike the Aïssâwa Sufi brotherhood in Kebili, discussed below, the Sidi Marzoug community appears to have many members and is growing.

My informant Leila first introduced me to the Sidi Marzoug community in late December 2011. Leila is a fifty-year-old Tunisian Arabic teacher who worked in the United States for a decade before returning to Tunisia five years ago to look after aging relatives. She was born and raised in Tunis; her mother was a black Tunisian Muslim, her father was a white Tunisian Jew, and she openly considers herself biracial. Her first husband was a black Tunisian, her second husband was a white American serviceman. Leila explained that although she was neither accepted nor rejected by the black or Jewish communities in Tunis, she has always felt welcomed by members of the mystical communities in Tunisia.

Before we visited the Sidi Marzoug compound, Leila described the community over a coffee in a café. Leila explained that all community members are black, and they believe that blacks indeed have special powers because they have extra blood and one more vertebra than whites. Leila said that the black community is very secretive, and will not tell a non-black outsider the truth. She speculated that the information that any white researcher may have gathered about *stambeli* or black practices in Tunisia might be wrong. Leila said that her black ex-mother-in-law used to sing very unusual songs with unintelligible *ajmi* (language used by black Africans in Tunisia) texts and unique rhythms. Leila said she once asked her about it. The woman refused to talk about them, and never sang them again. Leila suspected

that her ex-mother-in-law refused to discuss and sing the songs because she was biracial, and thus untrustworthy.

The next day Leila took me to “Sidi Marzoug” in Tozeur. It is a family home and the *zaouia* of Lila Gendua, a *marabout* who was a cousin of Sidi Marzoug. The most important black *marabouts* are Sidi Sa'ad Bu Akarouj (whose *zaouia* is in Tunis), Sidi Marzoug (whose grave is in Gileada but whose *zaouia* is in Nefta)⁸ and Lila Gendua. I spoke with Zacharia Sidi Marzoug, who is approximately seventy-five years old, and her daughter. Her son, Hassan Sidi Marzoug, is in charge of general operations. Zacharia stated that the extended family that lives in the Sidi Marzoug compound practices maraboutism, *stambeli* and Aïssâwa Sufism. She is also a healer and claims that she can touch fire without being burned. Each July they host a four-day *festival*, a *zarda*, always starting on a Wednesday. Both public and private celebrations are held during this time. They cook couscous and slaughter two black cows. It is a *baraqa* to have cows that are completely black. Then, they do a four-day celebration at Sidi Marzoug's *zaouia* in the town of Nefta, twenty kilometres west of Tozeur. These celebrations are in July because many people used to work in mines, that is when they had time off, there were lots of visitors in July, and the children were out of school.

I returned to Tozeur in late May of 2011 and with the help of my informant Lotfi, a thirty year-old massage therapist there, I made arrangements with Hasan Sidi Marzoug to see a *banga*. I was asked to pay TND 120 (£42) to cover the cost of the musicians and refreshments. Hasan said that this is the same fee that anyone requesting a *banga* would be asked to pay; Lotfi confirmed this later during a private conversation. Lotfi recalled that in April, “Sidi Marzoug” has a one-day *festival* during which community members walk door to door with a billy goat. They put on a short show with dancing and drumming, and the master

⁸ Belgecem told me that in Douz, Sidi Marzoug (forefather of the Marazig tribe) is venerated like the *marabouts* Ahmed el-Gouth and Amar Mahjoub. Gouth and Mahjoub are both buried in Douz.

of the house gives them some money and puts some henna and perfume on the goat. Then there is an all-town gathering at the Sidi Marzoug *zaouia*.

It is interesting that the residents of Tozeur believe that *banga* and performances by the *boussadia* both cast off *djinn*—even though *banga* is a group effort with drumming, singing and dancing, and the stereotypical *boussadia* is a single costumed performer accompanied by a *zokra* and drum troupe. Despite Zacharia's claim that her family practices Aïssâwa Sufism, Lotfi insisted there is no connection between Sufism and the *boussadia* or *banga*. He did not deny her claim nor he did seem to believe it either. He said that although there are Sulamiya Sufis in the region, they are really based in Libya and focus on a specific type of *Quran*-based songs. Lotfi added that, although there are some Aïssâwa Sufi communities nearby, they are mainly found in Morocco and concentrate on the spiritual connections these practices have to self-mutilation and trance. This tension between Zacharia and Lotfi's accounts underscores the conflicting ideas regarding Sufism in the region.

Banga was scheduled for the following evening. Although it was organized strictly for my benefit, Lotfi's extended family, friends, neighbours, and their children attended. I arrived at Lotfi's neighbourhood café and drank tea with him as we waited for the "okay" call from Hassan Sidi Marzoug before going to this *soirée privat* (private gathering) at Lotfi's grandmother's house. After the early evening call to prayer we were notified and went to her house. Upon arrival, I saw that one drummer had arrived, and members of Lotfi's family had gathered to make tea and coffee and arrange soda and biscuits for the occasion. Within minutes the rest of the band arrived and processed into the house as they played.

Shortly after the band started playing, a woman walked in and very quickly started to dance, fell into a trance and collapsed. Family members went to pick her up and revive her. Within moments she started to dance again, fell into a trance and collapsed. Again the family revived her and removed her from the centre courtyard of the house into one of the side

rooms. I asked Lotfi about this and he said that she was okay, and that some people respond to *banga* this way.

During a brief pause in the action I asked the band elder some questions. Unfortunately, Hassan Sidi Marzoug himself had not been able to attend and Lotfi cautioned me that the group's spokesman might not know many answers, or might not tell the truth.

The elder explained that the music and the dance had originated in Africa but had undergone adaptation once it arrived in Tunisia. He said that there are two categories of texts. One invokes and praises Sidi Marzoug and the other is of the *boussadia* genre. It tells the story of *boussadia's* journey and search for his daughter. *Banga* is done for the *festival* in April, for weddings and for the *zarda* for Sidi Marzoug, which Zaccariah Sidi Marzoug had said to be in July.

Although many children danced, both in the courtyard and in the foyer, one child was particularly engaged. He was encouraged to dance right in front of the band, who were now seated. One band member took the boy's shirt off and it appeared as if the boy was going into trance. As he continued dancing a band member came in with some burning branches and scared the boy, awakening him from his impending trance. The band member laughed constantly while the child dancer was startled and shocked, and seemed disappointed. Lotfi suggested that he wanted to go into trance in order to get attention and act like an adult. A family member brought the boy his shirt and some biscuits as he sulked in the corner with the other children.

One of the band members danced and went into a trance, supposedly with the help of the fire. Lotfi said that this dancer has been drawn to, and had participated in, *banga* since he was a small child. He shimmied and shook, and then danced in front of the band. A *jebba* (long tunic) was thrown over his face, and another band member started rummaging through his pockets, probably searching for sharp or dangerous objects. He danced for ten minutes in

a trance. Then a fellow band member brought in a large metal bowl filled with water. The entranced man was led to it and dunked his head into it. This brought him out of the trance and a fellow band member walked him to a bench and supervised his return from the trance. With this, the music stopped and the band prepared to leave.

However, before they left the group was asked to do a private healing in a room off of the main courtyard. This was for a child of the family with epilepsy. Lotfi said that sometimes families asked for a *banga* healing for illnesses like this when allopathic medicine does not work. I was encouraged to watch the healing without my camera and could barely see since the room was packed with musicians and family members. The healing lasted about ten minutes. The music for this part of the evening was not unlike the music for *banga*. The whole *soirée* lasted about an hour and the crowd quickly dispersed when the band left.

Hadhra near Douz

During a conversation with my informant Saif about Sufism and the practices that conservative Muslims in Douz consider to be extra-Islamic, he mentioned the female *marabout* Dahlia. Saif did not know much about Dahlia, but he did tell me that there is a *zaouia* for her near Douz, and that there are families in Douz who make regular trips there. While some go because it is a *baraqa*, others go to pray to Dahlia and ask for favours, or healings for themselves or for family members. Saif said that, as a child, he would go there with his family.

All of my informants in Douz knew about Dahlia and many, though not all, had been to her *zaouia*. However, no one knew the history of the small oasis where her *zaouia* is located. One informant, Oqba, started to tell me some aspects of the story (that were later confirmed by another informant) but he soon stopped himself and said, "I'm not really sure of this, you should ask someone else." Several people said that there is an annual *hadhra* festival there. Everyone knew that an elderly woman, Halima, was the caretaker of the *Dahlia*

zaouia, and that *hadhra* was held there. Most people agreed that Halima lives in the nearby village of Nouail, but not everyone agreed that she was still alive.

In June 2011, I hired a 4X4 and a driver for an excursion to the *Dahlia zaouia*, accompanied by three informants: Belgecem, Saif, and Fakhri. Most of the 25-kilometre trip was off road. The driver knew exactly where the *Dahlia zaouia* was but admitted that this was the first time anyone had requested to go there with him. A tiny oasis with several palm trees appeared after thirty minutes of bone-shaking travel over sand dunes. In this oasis there were two hand-dug wells, an outhouse, and one large building consisting of a *qubba* (a domed prayer room), kitchen, pantry, and storeroom. Behind the building were the remains of an older *qubba* that was reduced to rubble, and piles of pottery shards used to mark otherwise unidentified gravesites. In front of the building there were racks made of twigs and branches for drying sheep- and goatskins. Save the five of us, the *zaouia* was completely empty and there were no signs of recent activity.

Saif was willing to join me on the 18-kilometre bus trip from Douz to the village of Nouail to visit Halima. Upon arrival, we asked several shopkeepers about the location of Halima's house. One of them pointed out that her grandson was passing by. We flagged him down and chatted with him. He ran home to see if Halima could accept visitors, and came back after 5 minutes to say no. Halima is 90 years old, ill, and not lucid. He recommended that we speak to Halima's brother, so we went to his house and spoke with him instead.

Halima's brother, Fathi, is about 75 years old, runs a *Quran* school and maintains a *zaouia* in Nouail. He was happy to share the story of Dahlia and the *Dahlia zaouia* with us. He told the story with great confidence, even the parts that seemed chronologically impossible.

Dahlia Bint Mansour was born in Gafsa, Tunisia, during the 1st or 2nd century AH.⁹ Dahlia never married nor had any children. She left Gafsa for Saguia el-Hamra, in what is now the Western Sahara, and spent many years there as a wandering ascetic. At some point, Dahlia left the Western Sahara in order to return to Tunisia. While en route she passed through many villages and numerous young girls were fascinated by her, came to love her and followed her. Ultimately she arrived in the oasis just south of Douz with forty girls. According to the story, Dahlia and the girls practiced *hadhra*¹⁰ there, just chanting “*Allah, Allah, Allah ...*”, until they all mysteriously and suddenly disappeared.

Fathi stated that about six centuries ago, one of Dahlia’s relatives went looking for her, only to find her *qubba*. From that time on, the spot has been used for *hadhra* and slaughtering sheep for sacrifice. Fathi’s family has been looking after the *qubba* in recent times.

He said that neither the site nor Dahlia have a connection to any Sufi order even though there are vibrant Qadriya communities surrounding, but not in, Douz. According to Fathi, Dahlia and her *zaouia* date before the advent of Sufi orders. Each November or December, people from the surrounding towns gather for *hadhra* at the *Dahlia zaouia*. Fathi stated that his father started to build additional rooms at the *zaouia*, and he himself added rooms beginning in 1978 when the number of visitors increased. Currently, he is preparing to rebuild the ruined *qubba* (which is the second or third on the site) and the *rauda* room for Quranic readings and *dhikr* (remembrance of *Allah*).

After our visit with Fathi I asked my companion Saif about our experience. In the past I have found Saif to be very conservative and sceptical of things that are “out of the ordinary.” Over a cup of tea Saif said, “Fathi is a very kind and knowledgeable man.” A bit

⁹ 1st century AH = 622 AD – 719 AD; 2nd century AH = 719 – 816 AD.

¹⁰ He uses the term *hadhra* to describe the gathering at the site, not in the Sufi sense, but strictly as a communal act of remembering *Allah* compliant with the practices of Sunni Islam.

later and without provocation he added: “Maybe the French colonizers brought the idea of holy men to Tunisia to weaken the connection between man and *Allah*,” a topic explored in Chapter 2. This questioning of, and resistance to, Sufism and maraboutism is seen throughout Douz. Despite that fact that Sufi and maraboutic practices can be found throughout Tunisia, the residents of Douz, like Saif, reject them. They prefer to associate the presence of Sufism and maraboutism in the region with external powers, such as the French colonizers, rather than accept that these traditions are part of the region’s cultural and spiritual history.

I also discussed the visit to Nouail with several of my informants. It is interesting that many people know Fathi, and see him regularly at the mosque in Douz for *juma* prayer on Fridays. He is very well respected, but no one made the connection between Halima, the *Dahlia zaouia*, and Fathi. Additionally, no one associated Fathi with the *hadhra* at the *Dahlia zaouia*. Although one informant, Moez, openly admitted that he had participated in the *hadhra* there, most informants in Douz made fun of the *hadhra* at the *Dahlia zaouia* and *hadhra* in general.

Although some of my informants described the event at the *Dahlia zaouia* as *hadhra* in the Sufi sense, others did not consider it to be Sufi but instead a communal act of remembering *Allah* falling in line with mainstream Sunni practice (see footnote 10, page 118). In many regards it resembles *zarda* in that it is a pilgrimage to a holy site connected to a *marabout* which features animal sacrifice. Regardless of its name, the event fills a unique role. Some attendees go for spiritual reasons, others are undecided about its spiritual component but enjoy the festivities nonetheless, and others see it solely as free entertainment.

The residents in other towns in *Nefzaoua* have very different attitudes towards mysticism and Sufism. Although the Aïssâwa Sufi community in Kebili, 30 kilometres north of Douz, is waning, citizens express pride in the fact that the town is associated with this

order throughout the *Nefzaoua*. In the following section I describe both the community and the *hadhra* there.

Hadhra in Kebili

Nestled between two salt lakes in the *Nefzaoua*, Kebili is a vibrant town at the northern edge of the Sahara Desert and the capital of the administrative district. Kebili has been an important cultural and historical centre for centuries. For the last two thousand years, the town and the surrounding region have been occupied by a number of diverse cultures including Berbers, Arabs, Romans and French. During each era of occupation, it has remained a vital market town and has historically been an important outpost for travel and trade between sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa and Europe. The importance of Kebili was its strategic location on the route from sub-Saharan Africa to Gabes, Tunis, and Europe. For centuries, it was considered the capital of southern Tunisia, with the earliest documented settlement dating to approximately 500 AD. Kebili was a central meeting place for Arabs, Berbers and blacks, and home to a small slave market. According to my informants, communities of free and enslaved blacks lived side by side. Kebili was an important stop during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries¹¹ for slave traders en route from Timbuktu to northern Tunisia and Europe because it was the intersection of several trade routes. Some wealthy landowners in the region bought slaves in work in the *palmeries*. At the same time, many families from sub-Saharan Africa came to Kebili to settle, mainly because it was the capital of the south and a flourishing centre for trade. According to my informants, there was a Jewish community in Kebili for centuries and intermarriage between Arab, black, Berber, and Jewish families was not uncommon.

For most tourists, Kebili is just a transportation hub, and guidebooks usually dedicate no more than a couple of paragraphs to it. After passing through one of the town's main gates,

¹¹ Slavery was abolished in Tunisia in 1846 (see Montana 2013).

the palm trees and a general dusty beige appearance do nothing to attract people to explore further. However, well away from the standard tourist route, in the midst of a lush oasis only three kilometres from the modern town, lies *Kebili Qadima*, “Ancient Kebili”, and the magnificent ruins of the old town dating back to the seventeenth century. The site includes remnants of homes, *zawa*, a *rachba* (a market square), and a mosque. Here I saw the last vestiges of an Aïssâwa Sufi community.

The Aïssâwa Sufi brotherhood was founded in Meknès, Morocco by Sidi Muhammad ben Aïssâ (1465-1526) (see Nabti 2010). An Aïssâwa community was established in Kebili around 1859 with the arrival of the wandering ascetic Mhamed Behloul. He travelled from Meknès and settled in Kebili because he felt it was an important cultural centre for the region. From the end of the nineteenth century to the latter third of the twentieth century, the brotherhood flourished, as did Kebili. Entire extended families often became involved in the community, as did many immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa (see Seiwert 1993).

While Kebili’s location was initially instrumental to the establishment and development of the Aïssâwa community, as time progressed, it also became the reason for its decline. With the rise of industrialization and modernization in Tunisia’s major cities, the lifestyle offered by the small and mid-sized southern towns became less desirable. Presidents Bourguiba and Ben Ali promoted the development of the industrial, commercial, and tourist sectors of the economy in Tunis, Hammamet, and Sousse, while much of the south was ignored. Although economic prospects for Kebili are better than other southern Tunisian towns, many young people have left in order to seek more promising opportunities elsewhere.

The decline of the Aïssâwa community of Kebili can thus be attributed to a combination of economic conditions predicated by geography and a diminished interest in the mystical spirituality of the past. According to Mustapha, President of the Association for the Preservation of *Kebili Qadima*, there are currently twelve active members of the Aïssâwa

brotherhood in Kebili, and most live in or near the town. Some come from the same family and in some cases, entire families embrace the tradition. Many people in Kebili, and in neighbouring towns, enjoy seeing the Aïssâwa *hadhra*. Although it remains popular, membership is dwindling and fewer young people are interested in participating. Mustapha stated that decades ago it would have been difficult to join the order. Initiates would have been required to make many declarations of faith, but now, it is much easier to join because of the declining numbers. Currently the Aïssâwa community does not perform *hadhra* regularly; only for the Prophet's birthday, *eid al-Fitr*, *eid al-Adha*, marriages, *festivals*, and by special request. Unlike some of the other Sufi orders in the region, they do not see *hadhra* as a healing rite and do not perform it as one. For the Aïssâwa of Kebili, *hadhra* is a devotional practice.

In the heart of *Kebili Qadima* is the spiritual centre of the community, the shrine to Sidi ben Aïssâ. *Hadhra*, the ritual musical practice of the order, begins and ends at this shrine. It was during my second visit to Kebili that, with the help of Mustapha, I was able to experience *hadhra* performed by the Aïssâwa community. Shortly after *maghrib* prayers, members of the brotherhood gathered near the museum in *Kebili Qadima*. Once everyone arrived, we walked through the ancient labyrinth to the *zaouia* of Sidi ben Aïssâ. There, I got a brief tour of the shrine while the musicians gathered their instruments and prepared for *hadhra*. Although the *zaouia* is now just a basic domed structure, the centuries of incense, candles, and prayers are palpable. Unlike many other structures within *Kebili Qadima*, this *zaouia* has been lovingly maintained.

Hadhra began once the musicians had finished the necessary preparations. Drummers, the *zokra* player, and accompanying community members lined up outside of the *zaouia* and started playing. After a minute or two, the ensemble and a handful of attendees processed

from the *zaouia* through *Kebili Qadima* to the courtyard of the central building on the campus, where the café and museum is located.

The ensemble settled in the courtyard, where they played to a group of approximately thirty attendees for over an hour. Some of them were Mustapha's guests; he notifies them when *hadrha* is being held because they enjoy watching it. Other attendees live or work near *Kebili Qadima* and walk to the courtyard as soon as they hear the music. The musicians invited six devotees who are not part of the ensemble; they sang along with the group but did not play *bendir*. The ensemble sang songs to praise *Allah*, and others to the Prophet Muhammad and Sidi ben Aïssâ. Most of the songs were sung collectively by the ensemble while most members also played the *bendir*. Many of the songs also had *zokra* accompaniment.

After twenty minutes, there was one moment that was particularly moving and poignant. One of the older singers offered a song, with a vocal part that alternated with solo *zokra* interludes. The ensemble remained still, as did the small audience. The text was very foreign to me, and no one was willing or able to offer a translation. Whatever the subject or text was, it moved the singer to tears. As the song progressed, attendees were transfixed by the heart-felt performance of this singer, and his struggle and drive to continue singing despite the raw emotion it conjured up in him.

Throughout North Africa, the Aïssâwa Sufis are well known for trance-induced acts including walking on hot coals or broken glass, and charming poisonous snakes. The Aïssâwa community in Kebili has its own unique practice, inserting thirty-centimetre long nails through their tongue, cheeks, chest, and arms, during *hadrha*. During *hadrha* in Kebili, one young man did just that several times while his Sufi brothers ecstatically sang and played. It appeared to be bloodless and painless, and the young man returned to his place with his

bendir once he removed the nails. It was a mystical demonstration of the Aïssâwa ideology that “with *Allah*, and for *Allah*”, all fear and pain can be transcended.

As *hadhra* concluded, several attendees were moved to dance as the ensemble played. Two men in particular fell into a trance, and were closely monitored by the community’s *arifa* (master). As the music ended, they were safely escorted to chairs and monitored for a safe return to ordinary reality. At the conclusion of the *hadhra*, some musicians dispersed, others continued to play informally, and still others discussed more mundane matters such as who was getting paid for doing *hadhra* and how much was being paid. The musicians always get paid for performing *hadhra*; sometimes by the non-profit association overseeing the site, the Association for the Preservation of *Kebili Qadima*, and other times by individual donors. During my visit I offered to pay the musicians’ fees myself (TND 120, £42), however Mustapha insisted that I only pay half and that the association would pay half. After financial matters were sorted out, many members of the brotherhood slowly returned to the *zaouia* of Sidi ben Aïssâ. For some, it appeared to be a genuine spiritual and symbolic gesture at the end of *hadhra*. For others, it was a practical issue of securing the *zaouia* at the end of the day. The sun was descending on *Kebili Qadima* and the call to prayer for *isha* prayer was fast approaching.

Although the residents of Kebili enjoy watching members of the Aïssâwa brotherhood and their *hadhra*, the community is waning. Mustapha claimed that the younger residents of Kebili are not interested in participating in mystical spiritual practices because they are more interested in the latest fashions, music, and technology. Committed members of the Aïssâwa brotherhood are often pulled away from the community and Kebili in order to support their families. The Association for the Preservation of *Kebili Qadima* has worked diligently to promote and preserve the site and the brotherhood. The association receives most of its support from private donations; however, the Tunisian government does provide some

funding. The harsh reality is that the government and most Tunisians are struggling economically, and there is insufficient funding to support historical sites and Sufi brotherhoods. Mustapha stated that the 2011 Tunisian Revolution had an adverse effect on the nation's economy and that funding for cultural programs has disappeared. Nonetheless, the association continues to work hard to preserve *Kebili Qadima* and the local Aïssâwa traditions. They facilitate an annual *hadhra festival* as well as a regular conference on Sufism and the Aïssâwa order. Despite dwindling resources and brotherhood members, they continue chanting and drumming.

It is clear that *hadhra* and *zarda*-based events are very different types of events from weddings, *spectacles* and *festivals*. Although they are based on religious practices, few Tunisians participate in them as such because these practices are not part of mainstream Sunni Islam. At the same time, Tunisians are fascinated by events that evoke images of the country's heritage. *Hadhra*- and *zarda*-based events are difficult to categorise because many Tunisians respect their religious and ritual functions, but at the same time see them as entertainment. I suggest these events are community-centred social gatherings focused on spiritual practices that are waning in popularity and considered by some to be old-fashioned. These events allow younger Tunisians to experience the religious and social traditions of their grandparents in a way that does not conflict with the current practice of Islam in the country. In the next section, I illustrate how *soirées stambelis* serve a similar function to *hadhra* and *zarda*-based events. *Stambeli*, with its connection to the community of displaced black Africans in Tunisia, also serves as a symbol of the country's historical connection to sub-Saharan Africa.

Soirée Stambeli

During a fieldwork visit in the summer of 2012, I was staying at a small hotel in the town of Sidi Bou Said, a seaside suburb north of Tunis. Since the clerk at the front desk

noticed that I carried an *oud* in and out of the hotel each day, he asked me about my musical interests and research. Upon returning to the hotel on the last full day of my visit, he urged me to put my *oud* in my room and follow him to a *soirée stambeli* near the hotel. He explained that everyone in the neighbourhood knew about it and was invited. He was pleased to explain that he told the neighbours about me, and that I was invited too.

After a five-minute walk to a modest house in a residential district, I was greeted by a Tunisian woman in her fifties who encouraged me to take a place in the courtyard. It was filled with approximately sixty friends and family members seated in plastic chairs. The musicians and dancers had already started. The ensemble, led by the renowned *gumbri* player Salah el Ouegli, consisted of eight singers and *shqashiq* players, and was accompanied by three dancers, including Riadh Zaouch—the celebrated dancer and caretaker for the *Mausolée Sidi Ali Lasmar*. They danced and played while friends and family watched, chatted, smoked cigarettes, drank mint tea and ate snacks provided by the hostess.

Stambeli is “a healing trance music created by the descendants of sub-Saharan slaves brought to Tunisia.”¹² *Stambeli* repertoire and practices have been thoroughly documented in Richard Jankowsky’s 2010 monograph, *Stambeli: Music, Trance, and Alterity in Tunisia*. Several of my informants in Tunis are *stambeli* musicians, and have invited me to *soirées stambelis*—informal performances of *stambeli* music. These are gatherings of musicians, family members and invited guests, in private homes, that last for two or three hours. They usually begin after the evening call to prayer. The *soirée stambeli* retains some of the conventional ceremonial components: music from the *stambeli* repertoire on traditional instruments, shared food, incense, and the recitation of selected *suwar* from the *Quran*. Some aspects of traditional *stambeli* ceremonies are absent, notably active spirit possession and an *arifa*, or healer, who is responsible for “mediating between the human and spirits

¹² <http://www.stambeli.com>

worlds.”¹³ Customarily, the head of the household arranges a *stambeli* ceremony when a family member has a physical or psychological illness that is not responding to conventional treatment. My informants maintain that *soirées stambelis*, as opposed to traditional therapeutic *stambeli* ceremonies, are primarily intended for entertainment. The music and dances at the therapeutic and non-therapeutic forms are identical; the difference lies in the intention behind the event. My informants stated that the *soirées* held for entertainment still have spiritual value and it is believed that families who host *soirées stambelis* receive a *baraqa* from the *stambeli* spirits. They hold a *soirée* whenever there is a guest visiting, or if a musician or friend suggests that one be held. Neither money nor gifts are exchanged, and the host is expected to provide food and drink. Passers-by and neighbours are always invited. The *soirée stambeli* is primarily about neighbourhood sociability.

It appears that the *soirée stambeli* in Sidi Bou Sidi was a typical one. According to the attendees I spoke to and the hotel clerk, it was not held for a particular reason. It was intended as a social event and a *baraqa* for a middle-class household and its guests. They appreciate *stambeli*, but are not overly religious. I sensed a degree of solemnity throughout the evening. Guests spoke in hushed voices, watched the performance, and subtly moved rhythmically to the music. They did not actively participate in music, dance or ceremony, but were very attentive to it. It appears that guests attend in order to socialize and affirm their belief in the blessings bestowed by *stambeli* practices.

The *zarda*, *hadhra*, and *stambeli*-based events have many similarities. First, they are intended for the local community. Tourists would be welcome; however, there is no publicity and invitation is only by word-of-mouth. Second, these sacred events, like the more intimate ones, are unlikely to involve commodification. The organizers of these events collect donations from attendees in order to pay performers, but there is no intention to make a profit

¹³ www.stambeli.com/Stambeli.com/The_Stambeli.html

from them. Third, these are events for articulating and sharing cultural and spiritual heritage, not spaces of artistic innovation. Fourth, they serve both secular and sacred functions.

Tunisians respect their religious and ritual significance, but at the same time enjoy them as forms of entertainment. Fifth and most important, they are based on spiritual practices that are part of Tunisia's heritage but are outside of mainstream Sunni Islam.

Conclusion

Tozeur and Kebili are towns at crossroads; I suggest that they are more cosmopolitan than Douz because they are transportation hubs. Inhabitants definitely consider themselves more sophisticated than their neighbours in the *Nefzaoua*. Throughout the region, these towns' local musical traditions are identified by the ecstatic communities in them. Residents accept the beliefs and practices of those communities, whether or not they share their beliefs or appreciate their music.

In contrast, the residents of Douz take great pride in their Marazig and Bedouin identities. Although mystical practices had a place in Douz before independence, and have a small role in the contemporary religious landscape, current residents reject Sufism and maraboutism. Despite the fact that Sufi musical practices are still part of wedding practices and festival performances, the citizens of Douz prefer to depict their identity as twenty-first century sedentary semi-nomads who practice conservative Sunni Islam and suppress the mystical traditions that have been a feature of the *Nefzaoua* for centuries.

The residents of Douz also feel that the focus of the cultural and musical life of Douz is the International Festival of the Sahara and weddings. Additionally, most of the music made during the festival by residents of Douz is based on music for nuptial practices. My informants believe that weddings have tremendous social and religious importance. They value weddings as rituals, rites of passage, and opportunities to affirm religious beliefs and Marazig practices that are central to their identity. A further discussion of weddings and

wedding practices appears in Chapters 5 and 6. During wedding celebrations, the Sufi or maraboutic roots of some practices are overlooked. One of these practices is the *Burda*.

The singing of the *Burda* during weddings is one of the ways that the residents of Douz portray themselves as devout Sunni Muslims. The poem is treasured by many citizens of Douz because it extols the virtues of the Prophet Muhammad. Many Muslims believe that reciting it bestows blessings on both the performer and listeners. However, the residents of Douz ignore the connection between the *Burda* and Sufism, specifically the fact that the poem and its author, al-Busiri, have their roots in the Shadhiliyyah Sufi order. In Douz, the *Burda*'s connection to the Prophet Muhammad is stressed, but its relationship to Sufism is overlooked. This is an example of how customs in Douz are reframed in order to emphasize citizens' adherence to Sunni Islam and to minimize the connection to mystical practices.

There are other practices that appear at weddings and the Douz Festival that depict other aspects of Marzig identity. Although the hair dance, *nakh*, has erotic connotations in other parts of the Arab world, the residents of Douz understand it as a celebration of feminine beauty and their Bedouin roots. Covering the head and the hair, for both men and women, is not explicitly dictated by the *Quran*; it is seen as a form of modesty in Islam. In Tunisia, both the exposure and covering of women's hair has a long and complex history rooted in politics and religion. For the residents of Douz today, *nakh* is a part of the wedding during which femininity and feminine beauty are celebrated in a fashion that evokes images of the wedding ceremonies conducted by their Bedouin ancestors.

Like the *nakh*, *zokra* bands and their repertoires are understood as symbols of the Bedouin heritage of the Marazig and Douz. As we will see in Chapter 5, despite the fact that in North Africa the *zokra* and some of its repertoire is associated with Sufi brotherhoods, namely the Aïssâwa order, the residents of Douz embrace it as an emblem of their Bedouin ancestors. In Chapter 5, I will explore in detail how three wedding practices, *zokra* band

performances, the *jeffa* wedding procession, and the *nakh*, are used to represent and promote the Bedouin identity of the Marazig during the Douz Festival.

I conclude here by invoking Falassi's definition of festivals as a "sacred or profane time of celebration, marked by special observances" (Falassi 1987:2). Despite their differences, the forms considered in this chapter and the preceding one – *spectacle*, *festival*, weddings, *zarda*, *hadhra*, and *soirée stambeli* – are indeed celebratory observances that distinguish the ordinary from the extraordinary. They offer Tunisians the opportunity to perform and experience their musical heritage in a variety of settings, both secular and sacred.

Chapter 5: Wedding Practices at the Douz Festival: *Zokra* Bands, *Jeffa* Processionals, and the *Nakh*

As demonstrated in Chapter 4, weddings are the most important opportunities for music making in Douz outside of the festival. In Chapters 5 and 6, I return to a number of subjects briefly introduced in Chapter 4, considering in greater detail the five wedding practices that are incorporated into the festival and their importance to the process of identity negotiation. I will be looking at these five practices within the contexts of both weddings and the festival. In Chapter 5, I discuss the performances by *zokra* bands, the *jeffa* procession, and the *nakh*. According to the residents of Douz, these are practices that emanate from their Bedouin heritage; accordingly, an exploration of them introduces the discussion of the significance of the Bedouin image in the Arab world. I suggest that *zokra* bands, the *jeffa* procession, and the *nakh* are performative expressions of what it means to be “of Douz”. More specifically, I contend that they serve as symbols of Bedouin-ness during weddings and festive representations of wedding practices. In Chapter 6, I explore the *boussadia* and the snake charmer. These performers do not appear at every wedding because they are viewed primarily as entertainment. The families of the bride and groom ultimately decide which entertainers will perform during the wedding celebrations. Although both the *boussadia* and the snake charmer are commonly seen during weddings in Douz, they are not described by residents as Bedouin in origin, but rather as imported from other parts of Africa. They therefore present an opportunity to explore the role of blackness, race, and Sufism in the festival. In this capacity, I argue that the *boussadia* and snake charming are ways of representing the Other in Douz.

I begin this chapter with a description of *zokra* bands and their performances. They appear at all weddings, except the most basic ones that only consist of a contract signing at town hall. Although the *zokra* is often associated with Sufi rites throughout North Africa, in Douz it is considered quintessentially Bedouin. It seems likely that its mystical connotations

are disregarded because the residents want to be viewed as moderate Sunni Muslims. Second, I discuss the *jeffa* processional, the camelback journey of the bride to her new home. Third, I explain the *nakh*, the hair dance performed at weddings. Although *zokra* bands, *jeffa* processionals and *nakh* are found among many groups in North Africa with Bedouin heritage, at the festival and weddings in Douz they are prominent markers of identity. All of these play a part in the public expression of what it means to be “of Douz.” I suggest that these practices are used by the residents of Douz to represent themselves as contemporary Bedouins who embrace a conservative form of Sunni Islam.

The association of *zokra* bands, *jeffa* and the *nakh* with weddings is important. Weddings are not just rites of passage for the bride, the groom, and their families; they are important rituals because they bring communities and kin together to renew relationships. Marriage is about the change in social status of two individuals and the integration of a new family unit into a community. Wedding rituals reframe “the larger unity of the extended family and the cultural community they belong to” (Kochuyt 2012:1631). They are rites of passage that “[realign] people by stressing continuity and bringing in traditions that prevent time from unravelling social ties” (ibid.). Although weddings in Douz are primarily religious events, they are important to the town’s social fabric. I contend that representations of wedding practices are featured during the festival because, as Kochuyt explains, they are the principal rites for articulating the bonds between the individual, the family, and the community and therefore help define what these groups hold in common and recognize as important to their community.

One informant, Abdelati, a 60 year-old artist and event producer, stated that marriage is the most important rite of passage in Islam: “it is the door from one life to another, from single to married life, and completes us as human beings in the eyes of *Allah*.” Abdelati stressed that marriage has universal meaning in the three Abrahamic religions: Christianity,

Judaism, and Islam. Witte and Nichols, in their 2008 article concerning marriage contracts from theological and legal perspectives, agree that marriage is a religious practice that has similar spiritual and cultural meanings for Jews, Christians, and Muslims. First, it is a reminder of the “ultimate creation and commandments of God” (Witte and Nichols 2008:603). Second, it recognizes that the couple does not exist in isolation and serves a role in their social and spiritual community (ibid.:604). Third, the three religions recognize that marriage perpetuates the faith, “not only by the couple maintaining their own household rites ... but also by the couple’s procreation and teaching of children” (ibid.:605).

Weddings, and festive representations of them, are markers of Bedouin identity because they are the most community-centred rites of passage. I suggest that the power of nuptial rituals is rooted in Tunisia’s pre-colonial era, when marriages confirmed allegiances within and between families, and anticipated the arrival of children to ensure the future of the extended family (see Al Haj 1989; Al Haj 1990). These aspects of marriage continued well into the twentieth century. Unlike other rites of passage, all members of the community are eligible to participate, including family members of all ages and invited guests—which includes anyone who expresses an interest in attending. Participation in other rites of passage, including childbirth, circumcision and funerals, is generally restricted to immediate family members. According to my informants, the ceremonial aspects of these other rites of passage are limited throughout Tunisia. They stated that circumcision rites are simple, private events that are celebrated at home with cake and sweets. In accordance with Islamic traditions, burials must take place within twenty-four hours after death. There is no music or extended ritual at funerals, other than prayers and Quranic recitations at the time of burial. Immediate family members remain in a state of mourning for forty days after the death of a loved one and have limited engagement with the community. Birth, circumcision, and death are life events that are rites of passages about the “individual” which are observed by close relatives.

Weddings, in contrast, are rites that bring together two individuals, their families, and the community, that confirm societal roles and norms and are thus marked by the whole community.

Representations of wedding festivities are important to, and the basis of, the Douz Festival because they clearly depict Bedouin identity. For the residents of Douz, there is no other ritual celebration or daily practice that more completely encapsulates what it means to be Marazig, visually or symbolically. In order to demonstrate this, I will return to the description of the opening afternoon ceremonies of the Douz Festival at *Place H'nich*. This part of the festival best illustrates the integration of these wedding practices into the festival.

Zokra Bands

Following the two-hour lunch break during the first day of the 2009 Douz Festival, performers and audience members gathered at *Place H'nich* in the *Zone Touristique* for the festival's afternoon activities. Onlookers congregated in the small stadium and the adjacent makeshift viewing areas while performers prepared for their performances in plain view of the audience on a strip of the Sahara Desert that served as the "stage". After the announcer welcomed the audience, the performances began. Among the first set of acts to perform were the *zokra* bands. Each band consisted of one or two *zokra* players and three to five drummers. Usually three or four bands are in attendance. Each member of each band wore a full-length white tunic, a red or white waistcoat, white leather shoes, and a multi-coloured hat—the customary *zokra* band costume. Each band's hat featured different colours and patterns that designate where they come from. Most years, *zokra* bands from the southern towns of Medinine, Matmata, Tatouine, and Zarzis perform during the festival. One at a time, the bands approached the centre of the performance area in front of the crowd. They took turns promenading in front of the audience while playing folk songs and arrangements of pop songs. Band members often walk in a circle while performing; flashier bands and their

members might spin in place, twirl their drums, or execute elaborate dance steps, kicks and jumps while playing. Audiences always cheer and applaud loudly for the *zokra* bands as they finish their performances, process out of the limelight and move to the perimeter of *Place H'nich*.

The *zokra* (also known as the *ghaita*, *raita*, *reta* or *mizmar* in the Arab world, or *zurna* in Turkey and Eurasia) is a double-reed woodwind instrument, approximately forty centimetres long and usually made of apricot wood (Nabti 2010:234). Novice players learn circular breathing techniques as part of their apprenticeship, allowing them to play for extended periods of time without interruption (ibid.:234-5). Each band has one or two *zokra* players. When there are two players, they play in approximate unison. Ensembles have three or more percussionists playing large double-headed drums called *at-tbal*, *at-tablah*, or just *tamtam* (the generic Tunisian word for drum). Both heads are played alternately, using forty-centimetre-long sticks, one in each hand.



Figure 7. *Zokra* band at the 2009 Douz Festival (photograph by the author)

Zokra bands play folk, traditional and popular songs. My musician-informants stated that, although each ensemble claims to have a special repertoire based on songs attributed to their hometown, most bands play the same music. During fieldwork in Douz during the summer of 2010, I studied *zokra* with one of Douz's well-known players to better understand

the instrument's technique and literature. One song that was a staple of my teacher's repertoire, and became a staple of mine, was an instrumental version of the pop song *Alla Allah* by Amina Fakheth:



Figure 8. Transcription of melody from *Alla Allah* as sung by Amina Fakheth (transcription by the author).

In Douz, the *zokra* is an instrument that has become rich with meaning. Throughout North Africa, the Middle East, Eurasia, and the Mediterranean, the *zokra* is associated with festivity, weddings and mystical communities (see Farmer 1936, Schuyler 2000, Lundberg 2010, Rice 2010, Landau 2012). My informant Abdelati stated that the *zokra* is the musical symbol of wedding celebrations and that any wedding is incomplete without it. The instrument is also important to many Tunisians as a sign of the country's historical relationship to Turkey. Most of my musician-informants insist that the *zokra* was brought to Tunisia from Turkey during the Ottoman conquests of Tunisia in the sixteenth century. The desire to make a musical connection between Tunisia and Turkey is not surprising. Tunisian musicians revere classical and popular Turkish music and perceive it as highly sophisticated. Additionally, the *zokra* features prominently as a symbol of Bedouin identity. There are many postcards, paintings, and murals in Douz that depict *zokra* bands with camels in the desert, highlighting the pride Tunisians express in their Bedouin heritage.

As stated above, in addition to its role in wedding celebrations, the *zokra* contributes to the definition of identity because it is well known as the principal melodic instrument in ceremonies for the Sufi orders and mystical communities. According to Nabti (2010), the *zokra* is essential to the rites of the Aïssâwa orders because they believe that it invokes the

spirits and articulates, through music, important religious texts (Nabti 2010:237). Theodore Grame (1970) states that the *zokra* [*ghaita*] is part of the musical ensemble used by the Aïssâwa order in Jma al-Fna, the central market square in Marrakesh, to accompany snake charming (Grame 1970:83). Philip Schuyler (2000) describes the *zokra* [*ghaita*] as a central instrument for the Master Musicians of Jajouka, an ensemble from Jajouka, Morocco, a town well known for its music and mystical traditions. Schuyler states, “the spiritual and geographic centre of Jajouka is the tomb of Sidi Hmed Shikh, who is credited by the villagers both with bringing Islam to the region and with providing them with their livelihood, music” (Schuyler 2000:147-148). I argue that the residents of Douz ignore the long and well-documented connection between the *zokra* and mysticism because it does not reflect the image they want to project of the Marazig and Douz. Additionally, I suggest that they prefer to depict the Marazig as Bedouins who are strongly aligned with Sunni Islam. Thus, the *zokra* has become the symbol of Bedouin-ness and not the mystical heritage of the *Nefzaoua*. The question then becomes why the Bedouin image is such a powerful one in the Arab world.

Ali Jihad Racy’s (1996) description of the “Bedouin ethos” answers this question. Racy suggests that nomadism is equated with the virtues of purity, honour, hospitality, chivalry, and bravery; these characteristics are perceived to decrease as a group becomes more sedentary and urbanized (Racy 1996:405). Despite the fact that many formerly nomadic groups throughout the Middle East have become sedentary, many writers have argued that the Bedouin ethos still influences many aspects of public life, including but not limited to ethnic identity, politics, and business practices (see Bates and Rassam 1983; Barakat 1993; Hickson and Pugh 2001; Patai 2002; Price-Jones 2002; Lacoste and Lacoste 2004; Nydell 2006; Franz 2011; Lalonde 2013).

The promulgation of the Bedouin image of Douz and its residents does not only promote a sense of purity, sincerity, honour, and ethnic authenticity, but also differentiates

the town and its people from others in the *Nefzaoua*, the south, and Tunisia in general. It is both a proclamation of collective selfhood, and, as Longina Jakubowska points out, an identity that is distinct from that of the nation-state. Although Jakubowska's focus is on minority Bedouin communities within a Jewish state, I believe that her assessment of the political dynamics of identity is applicable to the Bedouin ethos in Tunisia. Jakubowska states, "Bedouin maintenance of marginality and isolationism is a refusal to participate in the discourse of nationalism and an effective means of resistance against state hegemony over identity" (Jakubowska 1992:85-86). During my visits to Douz, I witnessed both political and cultural resistance to engagement with the Tunisian national identity.

I was in Douz in December 2010 shortly after the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi. This was a pivotal moment in Tunisia's history leading up to the Jasmine Revolution of January 2011 (I discuss my experiences in Tunisia during the revolution in Chapter 8). Each night, I would watch the national news on television with informants and their families. One informant, Oqba, a fifty-eight year-old farmer, was riveted to the television and mesmerized by the events unfolding. After the news each night he would say, "it is amazing what is going on in Tunisia, but this does not happen here, Douz remains calm and unchanged." His view of the nation did not include Douz or its citizens. On one level Oqba understood that these events were unfolding in his country, Tunisia. On another level he believed that Douz and its residents were removed from the conflicts, social problems, and political turmoil in the rest of Tunisia. During my fieldwork visits I found this to be generally true. This cultural and political distance was often evident and took many forms. One evening in 2010, I shared a recording by a well-known socially conscious singer-songwriter from Tunis with my one of my informants in Douz. I asked my informant Skander if he knew the song or the artist, and if he liked it. He mentioned that he had heard of the song and the artist, but quickly dismissed it as "music from Tunis." Skander suggested that Douz is

different from the rest of the country. He explained that much of the country is influenced by trends and events in Europe, Egypt, and other Arab countries; Douz is not. Skander said that Douz is different; its citizens listen to traditional music and live a lifestyle that reflects different values, Bedouin values.

Despite the efforts by Presidents Bourguiba and Ben Ali to create a unified Tunisia with a culturally homogenous population, there are a few communities that maintain a unique identity. The Minority Rights Group International cites the Berbers of southern Tunisia and the Jews of Djerba and Tunis as such populations (“Minority Rights Group International”); I argue that the Marazig of Douz fit this description as well. As Jakubowska describes, the steadfast adherence to the Bedouin ethos and image enables Bedouin communities to separate themselves from the politics, trends, and history of the rest of the region and the country and to create a distinct identity. I suggest that this is also true of the Marazig in Douz. The question remains as to why the residents of Douz present an image of themselves that is so deliberately different and separate from the national one. Based on fieldwork observations, many Tunisians in other parts of the country describe themselves as progressive Muslims with lifestyles similar to citizens of Western Europe and progressive Muslim countries such as Jordan, Morocco, and Turkey.¹ Jakubowska offers one explanation, stating that Bedouin groups perceive identity differently. They understand it as “an internalized cultural construction embedded in the social system and manifested in the practices of everyday life” (Jakubowska 1992:85). In other words, Bedouin groups comprehend identity in terms of the distinctive daily acts that are associated with Bedouin-ness (and their Bedouin ancestors); their identity based on these practices supersedes their sense of connection to the nation-state. So from this perspective the Bedouin ethos for the residents of Douz is strictly about the local

¹ There are strong conservative factions in Tunisia. However, unlike conservative groups in other Arab countries, these Tunisian factions demonstrate a degree of tolerance for progressive ideologies in order to attract followers.

customs and morals despite an awareness of regional and national norms. Another answer may, in part, be tourism. Several of my informants have suggested that although the Douz lifestyle and its Bedouin identity are rooted in daily routines that go back many generations, residents recognize that the Bedouin traditions, customs, and lifestyle found in Douz (and represented at the festival) might be intriguing to visitors and therefore offer support to the tourism sector of the town's economy. However, as previously discussed, the tourism infrastructure in Douz is limited and tourists have been reluctant to return since the revolution because of fears of political instability and violence.

Just as the Bedouin ethos is important to construction of identity in Douz, so are both the practice of a contemporary, conservative version of Sunni Islam and the rejection of Sufism and maraboutism. Many of my informants have clearly and repeatedly stated that the citizens of Douz unequivocally disapprove of Sufism and all forms of mysticism. They state that the veneration of anyone or anything other than *Allah* is *haram* (forbidden in Islam). Although some repertoires, practices, and instruments may have historical links to Sufism or maraboutism, they are accepted because they are part of the Marazig heritage and their connection to mysticism is ignored.

Aversion to Islamic mysticism in general, and Sufism in particular, is not new. Elizabeth Sirriyeh suggests that as early as 922 AD, the date of the torture and execution of the Persian mystical writer and teacher Al-Hallaj, there has been opposition to mystics and their teachings (Sirriyeh 1999, ix, 133; see also Massignon 1983). A strong wave of anti-Sufi sentiment surged throughout the Islamic world in the 1920s and 30s with the rise of Wahhabism, a conservative interpretation of Islam based on the teachings of Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhab (Sirriyeh 1999:133, 157-160).

The principal objections to Sufism are twofold: the veneration of Sufi teachers and the practice of supererogatory rites, including the reading of mystical texts. A.A. Tabari, a

prominent twentieth-century Salafist² writer, explains that, in Islam, the Prophet Muhammad is the only teacher and role model that believers need and no other human being has the right to serve in this capacity (Tabari 1988:[i]). Thus Sufi teachers and holy men, and by default the founders of Sufi orders, are not considered worthy of veneration. In fact, the veneration of them is *haram*. Regarding Sufi supererogatory rites, Tabari cites the *Quran* (5:3), “This day I have perfected your religion for you and completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you al-Islam as religion” (ibid.). Here Tabari suggests that the only practices that are necessary and legitimate for Muslims are prescribed in the *Quran* or the *Hadith*. All others are *haram*.

Several of my informants have explained that they reject Sufism for exactly these reasons. They acknowledge that Sufi and maraboutic communities have existed in Douz and the *Nefzaoua* for centuries; however, they believe the brotherhoods and their practices no longer have a place in Douz. Some of my informants mentioned that some practices do have mystical significance. Moez openly discussed the fact that the *zokra* has deep spiritual meaning to the Aïssâwa Sufis. Habib and Belgecem talked about the ritual use of some *zokra* repertoire in neighbouring towns. In these towns, such as Kebili and Tozeur, the residents do not identify with the region’s historical connection to its Bedouin ancestors. The residents of Kebili and Tozeur perceive their towns as modern Tunisian ones, and for them the *zokra* is associated with the mystical rites that are still practiced locally, and is not equated with the Bedouin past. However, in Douz there is strong and persuasive town-wide public discourse, both oral and performative, which identifies with their Bedouin history and implies that the religion of Douz is mainstream Sunni Islam. Furthermore, it is not just any form of Sunni

² Salafism is a movement within Islam that emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century in response to the spread of European social, political, and religious ideas. Salafists follow literal and traditional interpretations of the *Quran* and *Hadith* and strive to practice Islam in the same fashion as the early believers (Kepel 2002:219).

Islam; it is the interpretation of Islam that they imagine their Bedouin ancestors would have practiced. To the citizens of Douz, it is not only the practice of Islam or the Bedouin ancestry that establishes citizenship and identity; the belief that they are practicing Islam in the same way as their Bedouin ancestors is critical.

Zokra band performances reaffirm for the whole community, and convey to the audience members as well, that the strong affiliation to and emphasis of Bedouin heritage is legitimate, authentic, deep-rooted and encompassing of several important societal institutions, namely life-changing rituals and religion. The *zokra* and its repertoire are symbols of marriage celebrations, and marriages are the valued cultural institutions at which Bedouin-ness is reproduced. The prominence of *zokra* bands and representations of wedding festivities at the Douz Festival confirms that marriage and Bedouin identity are important to Marazig-ness.

Nakh

After several opening acts at the afternoon session of the Douz Festival, including performances by guest ensembles and demonstrations of equestrian acrobatics locally known as “*fantasia*”, there are more re-enactments of traditional wedding practices. One of those commonly performed is the *nakh*, the hair dance described in Chapter 4. As soon as the master of ceremonies describes the dance, a group of girls and young women run to the centre of the stage area in preparation for their performance. Between ten and twenty dancers, dressed in Bedouin clothes, sit in the centre of the stage area waiting for the music to begin. Usually the music used for *nakh* at the festival is a recording that is broadcast over the public address system. Once the music begins, the dancers spin their heads and hair in a circular pattern in rhythm with the music, and they continue until the music stops. After the announcer invites the audience to thank the dancers with a round of applause at the end of their performance, they leave the stage and sit amongst the audience. If there were a real

wedding, the *nakh* would be performed during one of the evening celebrations at a *salon de marriage* with family, friends and neighbours watching. However, at the festival it is performed in middle of the afternoon at *Place H'nich* in front of residents and tourists.

Unfortunately, the literature on the *nakh* is limited. André Louis, a French academic working in Tunisia during the Protectorate era, suggests that it is one of the pre-marital rites in contemporary Tunisia that has retained its form, but is performed without a purpose (Louis 1973:400). This is how he describes the hair dance:

Kneeling behind a stone, the nubile girls remove their *bakhmoug* [shawl] and loosen their hair. To the rhythm of the drum and the *gha'ya* [*zokra*], they throw their hair in frantic jerks from left to right, moving their head in every direction as if possessed by a devil ordering them to make these mad gestures. And the object is to see which girl can go on for the longest with these whirling hair movements, admired by the boys and their mothers who are there in front of them (ibid.; see Boris 1951:138-141; Louis 1969-1971: "Danses").

Najwa Adra explains that in Morocco the *nakh* is performed to the sung poetry of male spectators (Adra 1998:408). She adds:

The unveiled dancers twirl their heads and upper bodies to swing their hair around. Dancers perform on their knees or standing, keeping their arms and bodies below the waist immobile. Older women ululate as they watch the dancing. They may also stop the dance when they decide it has gone on long enough (ibid.).

Additionally, Adra states that the dance was traditionally performed by the nomads of Tripolitania (an historic province of northwest Libya), southern Tunisia, and western Algeria (ibid.). Women's hair dances are commonly found throughout the Middle East, especially in the Gulf countries, on the Arabian Peninsula, and in Syria and Sudan (ibid.). Sadly, neither account provides significant insights into the dance, its origins, or its functions.

I contend that the performance of the *nakh* at the festival is another symbol of Bedouin identity of Douz and its residents. The festival is an opportunity for community members, performers, and organizers to put acts on stage that they believe best represent Douz and its heritage. The town's residents thoroughly enjoy wedding celebrations, and the *nakh* is one of the wedding performances that are most memorable to them. My informants

Moez and Belgecem in particular mentioned that, in Douz, the *nakh* invokes the memories of the Marazig's Bedouin ancestry. Moez said that when he sees the *nakh* he can imagine what his great-grandparents' lives would have been like in the desert, including scenes of weddings in the dessert, with traditional tents, bonfires, and banquets, and women doing the *nakh*. The public nature of the performances at *Place H'nich* reinforces my belief that the *nakh* does not have a blatantly sexual connotation in Douz. Given the visible presence of Islamic traditions of modesty that prevail in Douz, the *nakh* would not be performed in public in front of an international audience if it was understood to be licentious. It appears, as my informants suggested, that the *nakh* is a public celebration of feminine beauty. Most of the time, women are expected to be veiled and modestly dressed when outside the home, in accordance with the local interpretation of Islam. However, it is the frame of festivity—both at weddings and the Douz Festival—that allows for the reversal of social norms, making public displays of feminine beauty acceptable.

I also contend that the *nakh* does not have mystical connotations in Douz. Although the head movements that are central to the dance resemble those found in many forms of *dhikr* (see Chisti 1991), neither my informants nor the literature (Boris 1951; Louis 1961-1963; Louis 1973; Adra 1998; al-Zayer 2004; Ciucci 2008) support any connection between *nakh* and *dhikr*.

Additionally, the inclusion of the *nakh* at the festival confirms that weddings and the celebratory practices associated with them are important to the citizens of Douz. As I describe later in this chapter, ritual weddings are central to family and social networks in the town because they are opportunities to affirm friendships, family ties, and the importance of Islam to life in Douz.

Jeffa

Following the performance of *nakh* each year at the festival there is a representation of the *jeffa* processional. *Jeffa* is one of the last parts of the wedding celebration, usually held on the fourth and final day, and features the bride's ceremonial trip from her parent's house to her new home with her husband and his family. At the far edge of the performance space at *Place H'nich*, a large crowd of women and girls gather alongside an elaborately decorated *howdah* (also referred to as a palanquin— a carriage that sits on top of a camel's back, see Figure 9 below). All of the women and girls are outfitted in lavish Bedouin-style dresses and copious amounts of jewellery. A “festival bride” is guided into the *howdah* and the *jeffa* procession begins once she is ready and the music is played. A *zokra* band, or the recording of one, provides the music. As the procession traverses the *Place H'nich* “stage”, the women ululate—a common sonic indicator of joy used by women throughout the Middle East (see page 95, footnote 3). Once the procession arrives at the other side of *Place H'nich*, the women disperse and the music stops, representing the arrival of the bride at the groom's home.



Figure 9. *Howdah* at *Place H'nich* (photograph by the author)

The *jeffa* processional is another practice in Douz that reinforces the importance of weddings and the Bedouin ethos among the residents of Douz. In Tunis, as well as in towns in the south, automobiles decorated with white and pink ribbons are commonly used to transport the bride, groom, and the married couple from one destination to another during wedding celebrations. The citizens of Douz prefer to use a camel and *howdah*, obvious symbols of the Marazig's nomadic heritage. During my fieldwork visits, I only witnessed the use of a *howdah* in one other wedding, 120 kilometres west of Douz in Tozeur. Tozeur is regarded throughout Tunisia as being the most cosmopolitan town in the south because it has an airport. Vestiges of this town's Bedouin heritage are seen at weddings, albeit very infrequently.

Véronique Pardo's research on *jeffa* in the village of Douiret focuses on the relationship between the construction of palanquins (she uses this term instead of *howdah*), marriage rituals, and festivals in southern Tunisia (2006). Douiret is a berberophone village located 218 kilometres southeast of Douz. In Douiret, wedding festivities start on Sunday, end on Friday, and Thursday is the day of the palanquin (Pardo 2006:5). The palanquin is prepared in the late afternoon that day and at sunset the bride is transported from her parent's home to her husband's home in it (ibid.:6). The palanquin is an important component of wedding celebrations and is featured at the annual regional Spring festival, the Festival of the *Ksour* (fortified village or fort) (ibid.:4).

In Douiret, palanquins are decorated with olive branches, a *kilim* (rug), a *wazra* (large red woollen dress) and swaths of white fabric (ibid.:10). The camel transporting the palanquin is also adorned with an amulet, date palm fronds, and olive branches. Date palm fronds are commonly seen in southern Tunisia as symbols of abundance and fertility. According to Pardo, the olive branches signal that, for the purposes of the wedding, the camel is being used for peaceful reasons and not for combat (ibid.:9). Additionally she suggests that

the olive is important to the Tunisian economy and the olive branch on the palanquin represents how the groom's change of status from single to married depends on the production of olive oil. It is the revenue from olive that will feed the camel and support his family (ibid.:19). Olives and dates are both symbols of masculinity; each boy's father and paternal uncles plant a date palm or olive tree in his name at the time of his circumcision (ibid.:20).

Traditionally the *kilim* covering the belly of the camel used in the *jeffa* in Douiret is woven by the mother of the bride or the groom's sisters. Because most of the weavers in Tunisia are women, *kilims* are understood as symbols of femininity (ibid.:21). White cotton fabric is the first material that surrounds the palanquin. In Douiret, the white fabric is used in both daily dress and for weddings to represent women's purity (ibid.:21). According to Pardo, the layers of fabric on the palanquin are identical to the clothes worn by the bride as she travels to her husband's home (ibid.:26).

Each year in late March or early April, an official festival is organized by the southern villages near the town of Tatouine (Douiret is 22 kilometres southwest of Tatouine) (ibid.:30). Each village prepares a performance for the festival that represents its traditions. The citizens of Douiret always choose to perform a ritual re-enactment of the wedding procession including musicians and a camel with a palanquin to represent their village (ibid.:30). Pardo argues that the bridal palanquin, both at weddings and at the festival, represents the values of the society it presents, and the relationships that constitute it (ibid.:36). The importance of the palanquin, and the juxtaposition of symbols of masculinity and femininity embedded in it, suggests that the residents of Douiret consider marriage and male-female relationships to be central to the fabric of society in the village (ibid.).

Although the *howdahs* in Douz do not include date palm fronds or olive branches, they are constructed in the same way, with the same *kilims* and fabrics, as the palanquins in

Douiret. While they are important to weddings and festive representations of weddings, it appears that the residents of Douz understand the palanquin solely as a symbol of their Bedouin heritage.

Louis describes the *jeffa* as a kind of “bridal-cage chair” sent by the husband’s house to bring the bride to the couple’s home after the proclamation of marriage has been made (Louis 1974:404; see Boris 1951:129; Louis 1961-1963:II,153-154). He also explains that a luxurious car usually replaces the *jeffa*; however, “in the country”, a camel with the palanquin may accompany the bridal procession (Louis 1973:404-405). In this case, the bride’s sister or “maid of honour” may ride in the palanquin while the bride rides in the car (ibid.:405). The bridal procession, starting at the bride’s father’s house, makes a long circuit around the town and horns of the cars in the processional are honked in order to express happiness and announce that a marriage is taking place (ibid.). According to Louis, the *jeffa* processional includes musicians and dancers that stop at the town’s *zawa* and are periodically halted by armed groups pretending to seize the bride and bring her back to her father’s house (ibid.). He adds that the procession is allowed to continue if the bride agrees to show the group her foot (ibid.). Once she does, the aggressors pay a “penalty” to the musicians and fire their guns (ibid.).

During my fieldwork visits, I have never seen a car used to transport a bride in Douz, nor have I seen armed groups interfere with a *jeffa* processional. Wedding traditions do vary greatly throughout Tunisia; unfortunately Louis did not provide detailed information on the location of the wedding traditions he describes.

I argue that the use of the camel and *howdah* for nuptial transportation is yet another representation of the Bedouin ethos in Douz. The use of a camel instead of a luxury car is a clear evocation of a nomadic past that is unique to Douz. Mohamed Marzougi’s account of Marazig weddings in *Maarek wa Abtal: Thourat al Marazig* (1979) and *Ma’a al-badu fi*

halihim wa tuhalilim (1980) describe the use of camels in Douz in the early twentieth century. The camel is an important marker of Bedouin identity; in particular it is used as a symbol of power and patience (al-Krenawi 2000:98). These are two qualities that are vital to the Marazig self-image. The *howdah* itself completely conceals the bride from the sand and sun as well as from the glances of onlookers. Her protection from public gaze is an important component of the Islamic code of modesty as practiced in Douz and reinforces the value of the religion's code of personal conduct there.

Other Festive Representations of Weddings

While certainly a popular and established event, the Douz Festival is not the only place to see re-enactments of important wedding practices. Festive representations of weddings are not uncommon in southern Tunisia. In the town of Midoun (255 kilometres east of Douz), on the island of Djerba, there is a demonstration of traditional Berber wedding practices each Tuesday afternoon. Included in the festivities are a *fantasia*, *zokra* band performances, dancers, and a *jeffa* procession. The event is a bit of a curiosity. Local residents are clear that it is intended for tourists and the advertising is aimed at them; however, few visitors to Djerba ever make it to Midoun. Djerba is known for its resorts and beaches; Midoun is a thirty-minute taxi ride from both the island's capital, Houmt Souk, and its *Zone Touristique*. There are no other significant tourist attractions in town, save a crocodile farm and weekly market on Friday. So, most of the audience members are from the community. The Midoun "weddings," like those during the Douz Festival, are not genuine rites of passage, but they serve some of the same functions as other rituals. They bring together neighbours, friends, and extended families in an expression and celebration of the relationship between the individual and community.

Conclusion

Representations of wedding practices are key to the Douz Festival because weddings are essential parts of the town's social structure and community life. Weddings are the only rites of passage in which the larger community actively participates; they are events that highlight and reinforce the community's social and spiritual networks. As Witte and Nichols (2008) point out, weddings within the Abrahamic faiths remind citizens of man's covenant with God, affirm that couple's role in society, and perpetuate the religion (Witte and Nichols 2008:605). So, in Douz, wedding rites serve as symbols of faith.

The three practices that I discuss in the chapter, the *zokra* bands, *jeffa* processions, and *nakh*, are drawn from typical wedding celebrations and featured during the festival in order to depict the citizens of Douz and the Marazig as contemporary Bedouins while evoking their traditional and cultural heritage. In Chapter 6, I will discuss the practices that are less commonly seen at weddings: performances by *boussadias* and the snake charmers. The residents of Douz enjoy seeing them at weddings, and audiences are captivated by them at the festival. The Marazig consider these performers to be quintessential parts of the festival, but the discourse about these acts reveals ambivalence about what they represent.

The residents of Douz make a strong case that the *zokra*, *nakh*, and *jeffa* processions are symbols of their Bedouin heritage. However, there are no indications that the *boussadia* or snake charmers are related to Bedouin traditions or the practices of Sunni Islam. Rather, the evidence suggests that the *boussadia* has its origins in sub-Saharan Africa and *stambeli* practices, and snake charming has links to Sufism and North African traditions. Thus, there are citizens of Douz who have ambivalent feelings about these links; however, they are all undeniably part of Douz's heritage. These links suggest a connection to traditions that are neither part of the Bedouin ethos nor Sunni Islam, the two concepts that are central to the Marazig identity. In Chapter 6, I will explore these practices, the discourse regarding them,

and how the residents of Douz reconcile them in relationship to their Bedouin and Muslim identity.

Chapter 6: Wedding Practices at the Douz Festival: The *Boussadia* and the Snake Charmer

In Chapter 5, I explored the practices that are commonly seen at wedding celebrations and that appear at the Douz Festival. These practices, namely performances by *zokra* bands, the *jeffa* processional, and the *nakh*, have strong connections to the Bedouin identity of Douz and the Marazig. In this chapter, I investigate two other performances that periodically appear at weddings and play a significant role in the Douz Festival, the *boussadia* and the snake charmer. Unlike *zokra* bands, the *jeffa* processional, and the *nakh*, the *boussadia* and the snake charmer are not described by residents as being Bedouin in origin, but rather as being imported from other parts of Africa. The *boussadia* is the masked and costumed street performer who dances and plays large metal clappers, *shqashiq*, during *festivals* and weddings. He is found throughout Tunisia and, as I will demonstrate in this chapter, has connections to *stambeli*, Sufism, and sub-Saharan black Africa. Snake charming is a form of entertainment that occasionally appears at nuptial celebrations. Snake charming traditions are seen infrequently in North Africa; however, they are closely associated with the Aïssâwa Sufi order in Marrakesh, Morocco (see Grame 1970).

I argue that performances by the *boussadia* and the snake charmer at weddings, and their popularity at the festival, indicate that the issue of identity in Douz is not as simple as residents suggest. The citizens of Douz are proud of the fact that the *zokra*, *nakh*, and *jeffa* processions are symbols of their Bedouin and Islamic heritage. However, neither the *boussadia* nor the snake charmer is related to Bedouin traditions or the practices of Sunni Islam. Instead, there are connections between Douz and sub-Saharan Africa, *stambeli*, Sufism, and blackness that are notably absent from local discourse. I suggest that the inclusion of the *boussadia* and the snake charmer at weddings and at the festival confirms there are links between Douz and sub-Saharan Africa, *stambeli*, and mystical practices. This is despite the fact that the stories, histories, and residents suggest that Douz is strictly rooted

in a Bedouin and Sunni Islam heritage. In order to further explore the role of the *boussadia* at weddings, it will be helpful to return to an ethnographic episode I introduced in Chapter 1.

Boussadia at the 2009 International Festival of the Sahara

On Sunday, 27 December 2009, the forty-second session of the Douz Festival began with a two-hour performance at *Place 7 Novembre* starting at 9 am. Four *boussadias* participated in the opening ceremonies. One was traditionally dressed with a fur-covered conical hat adorned with assorted objects, a plain brown mask with fur accents, a fur vest, numerous fur “tails” attached to a fur belt, and pink trousers. The second wore yellow floral trousers, an orange and magenta conical hat, a full mask with a fake moustache and beard, and carried (and presumably played) a drum. The third was a hunch-backed *boussadia* wearing a witch mask and a costume made of tattered rags. The fourth, who made only a very brief appearance, had a fur covered conical hat decorated with assorted objects and a multi-coloured patchwork vest. The four *boussadias* did not apparently “belong” to any one musical group but mingled with the general assembly of musicians.

During the opening-day ceremony, every musical ensemble participating in the festival paraded up and down a half-kilometre stretch at *Place 7 Novembre*, near the centre of Douz. The melodies and rhythms of each group blended together to form a deafening cacophonous *zokra* band. In general, the melodies played for *boussadias* during the festival are in duple meter and are divided into two short units, each of which is played between three and five times. The units are played in alternation until a new melody is introduced or the dance concludes. (A detailed discussion of the music for the *boussadia* appears later in this chapter.)

On the second day of the festival, Monday, 28 December 2009, the morning performances were held in the *souq*. Among the new participants were two different *boussadias*. The first was dressed in a fur costume adorned with strands of beads, medallions,

and animal bones, a fur-covered conical hat, and played the *shqashiq* while he danced. The second was dressed in tatters, wore a ghoulish monster mask with an eye-patch in the shape of a skull, and neither carried nor played *shqashiq*. At times they danced separately, sometimes with selected members of the audience. Other times they danced together, swaying in time with the music, occasionally wrapping their arms around one another and dancing in close proximity. At the conclusion of one dance, the *boussadia* with the ghoulish mask ended up on the ground, leaving the impression that the theme of the dance was a struggle between good and evil and the physical engagement representative of some kind of fight. The *boussadias* periodically paused to have their picture taken with members of the audience. The music that was performed for the *boussadias*' dances was the same as that used during the opening day ceremony.

Accounts of the *Boussadia*

According to several written accounts, the *boussadia*'s appearance features a conical hat and a full-body costume adorned with pieces of mother-of-pearl, shards of broken mirrors, animal teeth, and assorted other accoutrements (Aziza 1975:42; Ben Abdallah 1988:179-184; Hosni 1996:145-146; Bedhioufi 2000:201; Lièvre 2008:86-88).

Contemporary additions include pieces of credit cards and tin cans sewn onto the costume. Additionally, a loincloth, skirt or extended belt with dried animal tails and feet are part of the outfit (Aziza 1975:42; Ben Abdallah 1988:179-184; Lièvre 2008:86-88). Some authors indicate that the costume is made of animal hide (Ben Abdallah 1988:179-184; Lièvre 2008:86-88), and others describe the addition of rags to the costume (Lièvre 2008:86-88).

Some authors and informants state that the *boussadia* is supposed to scare children, while others claim that they are intended to make children smile and laugh. Chadly Ben Abdallah (1988) states that "the *boussadia* personifies both the cruel ogre that eats children and the formidable genie that confronts the heroes in legends like those told to them by their

grandparents” (Ben Abdallah 1988:180). Although I never witnessed it during the Douz Festival, several authors and informants mentioned that some *boussadiaz* accept coins in exchange for the performance (Bedhioufi 2000:201; Lièvre 2008:86-88).



Figure 10. *Boussadia* photograph, courtesy of Riadh Zaouch (performer, date, and location unknown).

There are different stories about the origins and history of the *boussadia*. Several of my informants in Douz suggested that the name could be translated as “father of the blacks”. Another informant stated that this was incorrect, and that the proper translation would be “father of the ‘sadia””, with ‘sadia’ being a family name. Aziza (1975) states that the *boussadia* represents the deposed king of the ancient mythical empire of Mali, who shuffles from town to town preying on children who make sarcastic remarks about his decline and inadequacy (Aziza 1975:44). Ben Abdallah holds that it is impossible to offer a history of the *boussadia*, but nevertheless suggests that it has roots in sub-Saharan West Africa (Ben Abdallah 1988:183). Hosni claims that mid-twentieth century accounts suggest that the *boussadia* originated in Sudan. It is important to note that the name “Sudan” was used liberally by some writers in the mid-twentieth century to designate the modern country of Sudan, the African countries near Sudan, as well as black African countries and black

Africans in general. Several accounts describe how, historically, the performer in the *boussadia* was black (Hosni 1996:145-146; Lièvre 2008:86-88). Some of the *boussadias* I encountered were black and some were white. Several of my informants claimed that anyone could be a *boussadia* and others adamantly stated that *boussadias* must be black. They added that, since the primary purpose of the *boussadia* is to dispel *djinn* (evil spirits), the *boussadia* must be black because only black people can see *djinn*. I will further explore the topic of race in Tunisia later in this chapter.

Hosni discusses the relationship between the *boussadia*, the indigenous religions of sub-Saharan Africa, and Islam. He claims that the dance of the *boussadia* is a representation of a dance performed by African village witch doctors (Hosni 1996:145). He also states that witch doctors intentionally chose to transform their practice into one with absurd dancing, clothing, and behaviour as a result of forced migration to North Africa and conversion to Islam. According to Hosni, some specialists claim that the transformation of the dance from therapeutic ritual to entertainment was done to keep the tradition alive, although the transformation was marked with sadness regarding the fate of their traditions (ibid.). Although Hosni's account may evoke the qualities of folk history, it is important to consider his description when exploring the literature on the *boussadia* because it confirms its connection to spiritual healing practices in sub-Saharan Africa.

The *Boussadia* and African Spirit Possession Cults

It has been suggested that both the *boussadia* and snake charming practices are related to the African spirit possession cults that were active in North Africa until the 1950s. The accounts of these cults in Tunisia focus on the *Bori* practices associated with the Hausa people of West Africa and the *Zar* traditions in central Ethiopia. Major A. J. N. Tremearne, a British Hausa specialist, wrote one such account. He stated, "in addition to the *Bori* dances and the rites for rain, there are regular festivals and pilgrimages which must be observed if

the community is to be prosperous” (Tremearne 1968:224). Tremearne discussed specific examples in Tunis and Libya. In this context, he mentioned the *boussadia*:

Masquerades now take place, though these are mainly performed by Arabs, the only one in which the Hausas have any part being the Bu Sadiya [*boussadia*], in which a man dresses up in a mask ornamented with birds’ feathers (to represent the head of an eagle), puts vulture wings upon his shoulders and wears a coat of pieces of various skins—e.g. jackal, fox, hyena, and, if possible, leopard and lion. But this is not confined to the Salla [multi-day ritual of prayer and feasting]; it may take place at any time, the main care at present seeming to be a collection from the onlookers. Some of the Arab performances resemble the dance of Jato [a type of spirit] at the bori (ibid.:241).

Several of my informants in Tunis relayed similar accounts linking African spirit possession cults with the *boussadia*. They added that, unfortunately, some of the older practitioners of *stambeli* (see below) who knew the history of these cults in Tunisia have died and the details have not survived.

The *Boussadia* and *Stambeli*

The *boussadia* is a notable figure in *stambeli*, the “healing trance music created by the descendants of sub-Saharan slaves brought to Tunisia” (“Stambeli”). The *boussadia* is unique in *stambeli* tradition since he is not part of any families of spirits, does not afflict or heal humans, and does not possess dancers or provoke trance (Jankowsky 2010:49). Similar to the accounts described above, the *stambeli* community describes the *boussadia* as a sub-Saharan hunter searching for his lost daughter who had been taken by slave traders (ibid.:45). In *stambeli* tradition, the *boussadia* is the reminder of the journey of sub-Saharan across the Sahara Desert (ibid.:49). He is understood as the “mythic first musician of *stambeli*” and the figure responsible for guiding displaced sub-Saharan to the appropriate communal house in Tunis where extended families of descendants of slaves lived (ibid.:45). Jankowsky explains that the legends of the *boussadia* outline the themes of “displacement and alterity and its geocultural trajectory from sub-Saharan Africa to North Africa” (ibid.). The stories state that

the *boussadia* would guide freed slaves and newly arrived migrants to the communal homes in Tunisia associated with their ancestral home (ibid.:46).

There is also evidence that the *boussadia* had a role in the incorporation of Sufism into *stambeli* practices. Montana states that there is evidence that there was a *stambeli* brotherhood in Tunis named *Bu Sa'adiyya* [*Boussadia*] in the early nineteenth-century. Their ceremonies combined African ancestral beliefs with Sufi rites (Montana 2004:185). Unfortunately, there are no additional details on the brotherhood or their practices.

In contemporary Tunisia, the image of the *boussadia* from a *stambeli* perspective represents the traditions and spiritual practices of black sub-Saharan Africans, their journey to Tunisia, and their settlement there. During my fieldwork visits, I was able to visit with *stambeli* practitioners and attend *stambeli* gatherings. They confirmed Jankowsky's perspective on the role of the *boussadia* within the *stambeli* heritage. However, they added that the *stambeli* community is dwindling, and as it does, so do the memories and stories of the *boussadia*.

Music for the *Boussadia*

Most writers state that the *boussadia* plays the *shqashiq* while he dances, and others mention accompanying drummers. There is, however, no detailed description of the music for the *boussadia*'s dance in the literature. Jankowsky states that there is a specific *stambeli nuba* (*stambeli* song) for the *boussadia* consisting of short vocal phrases which are sung in an unfixed order and are repeated in fragments. He adds that the song's narrative describes the *boussadia*'s appearance and welcomes him to Tunis and to the city's slave market (Jankowsky 2010:48-9). Taofik, a wedding musician in Douz, stated that there is an extensive repertoire of melodies that could accompany the dance of the *boussadia*. However, he emphasized, the most essential element of the *boussadia*'s dance is not the melody, but the *shqashiq* rhythmic pattern:

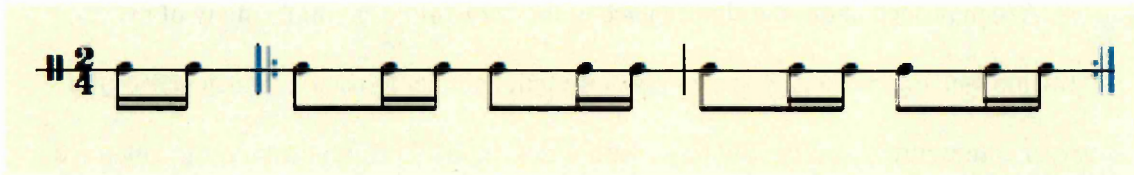


Figure 11. *Boussadia* rhythmic pattern

During the Douz Festival, *boussadias* dance to traditional melodies provided by *zokra* and drum bands that fill the streets and the town centre during each morning of the festival. Often, as four or five bands play simultaneously, the *boussadia* drifts over to one of them and starts his dance. Despite this, all my informants insisted that “Ya Baba Sidi Mansour” is the song of the *boussadia*. “Ya Baba Sidi Mansour”, simply known as “Sidi Mansour”, is a folk song commonly played by traditional and *stambeli* musicians, and was made popular through the Arab-speaking world by Egyptian singer Hakim (2001), the Tunisian singer Saber el-Robai (2002) and the Algerian Rai singer Cheika Rimitti (1994). The text is a plea for comfort to *Allah* and Sidi Mansour from a lover who is mourning a broken heart. All versions of the song appear to be derived from the basic folk song melody and feature the characteristic *shqashiq* playing the “*boussadia*” rhythm as illustrated here:

Figure 12. “Ya Baba Sidi Mansour”, transcription by author of performance by Youssef on 04 Jan. 2010

When probed about the significance of the “*boussadia* rhythm”, many of my informants who are musicians agreed it is a rhythm commonly used by musicians of the *stambeli* communities and the Sulamiya Sufi order. In the fifteenth century, the Sulamiya order evolved from the more widespread Shadilya order. It was founded by the *marabout* (or Sufi saint) Sidi ‘Abd al-Salam al-Asmar. It has been an active brotherhood in southern Tunisia since the time of the trans-Saharan slave trade. Some of my informants claim that the Sulamiya order was particularly active in the southern town of Kebili, 30 kilometres north of Douz, and an important stop in the slave trade route. The symbolic function of the *boussadia* at the Douz Festival can be understood after considering the connections between the *boussadia* and Sidi Mansour, Sidi ‘Abd al-Salam al-Asmar, Sufism, and the movement of black Africans through southern Tunisia.

Although my informants insisted that “Sidi Mansour” is the song most associated with the *boussadia*, they could not tell me anything about the *marabout* Sidi Mansour, or why a song invoking him is associated with the *boussadia*. The only information my informants offered was that his *zaouia* is near the town of Gafsa in southern Tunisia. A review of the literature on “Sidi Mansour” led to countless references to numerous Sufi saints with that name in locations ranging from Morocco to Iran. It appears that there were many individuals with that name, and that many Tunisians believe that the subject of the song is *their* Sidi Mansour. After consulting multiple sources on Sufi saints, I identified a particularly promising candidate—a venerated holy man in Tunisia known as Sidi Mansour Ben Dalya. Abdelhamid Hénia provides the only biographical data to be found; he states that Sidi Mansour Ben Dalya was born in the southern town of Monastir, and died near Gafsa, the site of his *zaouia* (Hénia 2006:221). Like Kebili, Gafsa was a stop on the slave trade route. Some of my informants confirmed this information, and added that Sidi Mansour is considered by some mystical communities in the south to be a powerful black *marabout*.

In order to better understand the connection between the song “Sidi Mansour” and the *boussadia* rhythm, I continued my investigation of the Sulamiya order. The brotherhood is most commonly associated with Sidi ‘Abd al-Salam al-Asmar. Born in 1475 AD in Libya, al-Asmar was credited with reviving the ‘Arussiyya Sufi order in North Africa (beginning with the nineteenth century, the order was referred to as “Sulamiya” in Tunisia, where there were numerous active lodges). Al-Asmar was credited with giving new direction to the order and introducing the playing of *bendir* during the *hadrha* having received authorization from heaven (Bosworth et al. 1980:93). According to Bosworth, the nickname “*Al-Asmar*” (dark-skinned) was given to him by his mother who had been instructed to do so in a dream (ibid.). Given the evidence, I argue that this account suggests there is a connection between the Sulamiya order and the community of black sub-Saharan Africans in southern Tunisia.

Another *marabout* who may have a role in this exploration of the *boussadia* is Sidi Saad. According to Lièvre, and several of my informants, another explanation of the origin of the *boussadia* is that he is the image of Sidi Saad, the patron saint of the blacks of the Maghrib (Lièvre 1987:80). Ismael Montana states that Sidi Saad al-Abid, an ex-slave from Borno, was elevated to sainthood during the early part of the eighteenth century as a unifying figure for the enslaved Sudanic communities who settled in Tunis because of the trans-Saharan slave trade (Montana 2004:179). Sidi Saad’s relationship to a specific Sufi order is unclear. I believe that the accounts of these *marabouts* help establish the link between the *boussadia*, the black community, and Sufism in Tunisia.

The *boussadia* and its connection to the song “Sidi Mansour” suggest numerous links between Douz and sub-Saharan Africa, pre-Islamic African cultures, and Sufism. I believe there is sufficient evidence to indicate that the *boussadia* has a symbolic role in public festivity in Douz despite the fact that some residents dismiss him as an imaginary character. The story of the *boussadia* and its music represents facets of the corporate identity of Douz

and Marazig in three ways. First, the *boussadia* as contemporary representation of a witch doctor and “father of the blacks” suggests connections to sub-Saharan black Africa. In addition, the *boussadia* is an important image in *stambeli*. *Stambeli* is closely associated with blackness and alterity in contemporary Tunisia (see Jankowsky 2010). Second, both the *boussadia* and the song “Sidi Mansour” indicate links to *marabouts* and Sufism. Third, the *boussadia* in Douz today, with costumes adorned with slices of credit cards and soda cans, reflects the culture’s encounter with contemporary society.

The question of identity surrounding the music, dance, costume, and myth behind the *boussadia* reflects the broader identity issues facing contemporary Tunisians. The three facets of Tunisian identity outlined above transcend festival performances to then provide heightened reflections upon aspects of everyday life.

Blackness in Tunisia and Douz

During my visits to Tunisia I have asked informants about race, racism, and blackness. The most striking conversation was with a staff member¹ at the *Centre des Musiques Arabes et Méditerranéennes* (CMAM) in January 2009. While explaining the government’s role in preserving culture he described the similarities amongst Tunisians: they look the same, they speak the same dialect, they follow the same school of Islamic law interpretation. He suggested that the majority of Tunisians are the same, except for black Tunisians. Although he clearly described them as Tunisian, he also identified them as black immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa. In his mind, they were intrinsically different from Tunisians of Arab and Berber descent, in ways that he said he could not explain. Some of my informants expressed the same ambivalence towards black citizens.

The challenge of discussing race in Tunisia is compounded by the fact that there are no polite terms in Tunisian Arabic to describe black Tunisians. Jankowsky refers to the terms

¹ This is the same staff member mentioned in Chapters 1 and 3.

wasfan (“servants”), *mahrūq* (“burnt”), and *hurr* (“free”) (Jankowsky 2010:17); however, my informants stated that these are archaic terms and none of them are still used. My informants in Tunis and Douz agreed on the following contemporary words to describe black Tunisians: *ousif* (“black”, derogatory), *kahlah* (“black”, derogatory), *kahlouj* (“black”, derogatory), *cousin* (“cousin”, mildly derogatory and joking), *abd* (“slave”, derogatory), *zingy* (“slave”, derogatory). Curiously, in contemporary Tunisian Arabic there do not appear to be any neutral terms to describe blacks, or any words to describe white Tunisians other than *arabiyya* (“Arab”). Many of my informants used the French word “*noirs*” (blacks) to describe black Tunisians, but acknowledged that this “borrowing” does not solve the fundamental linguistic problem. This suggests that the issue of race in Tunisia is more problematic than many citizens indicate.

Jankowsky explains that blacks in Tunisia have been seen as the Other since the beginning of the trans-Saharan slave trade. The earliest slaves were differentiated by both race and their non-Muslim status. However, neither conversion nor being born Muslim protected blacks from prejudice. Discrimination continued even when Tunisia was under Ottoman and French rule. (Jankowsky 2010:16). Jankowsky states that a distinction is made between the “blacks from the southern Tunisian oases ... who are considered more or less indigenous, and the rest of the black population, which is considered as descendants of displaced sub-Saharan, the vast majority of whom were slaves” (ibid.). In principle, the indigenous black population from the south are considered insiders while those who are descendants from sub-Saharan slaves outsiders (ibid.:17). Despite this ideological differentiation, prejudice still exists based on skin colour alone, regardless of indigenous status.

The black population in Tunisia is relatively small: one source suggests that only 5% of the population is black (“American Field Service”). For many Tunisians, blackness

represents sub-Saharan Africa and a symbolic connection to the African continent. Since independence in 1957, Tunisians and the Tunisian government have worked hard to establish the country as a “modern” and “Western” one. Its African heritage is sometimes seen as secondary; however, its geography, history, and role in the continent’s affairs cannot be ignored. Thus, the discourse reflects the greater internal conflict Tunisians struggle with: the reconciliation of Tunisia’s “white” Middle Eastern and European identity with its “black” African identity.

I received a wide range of responses when I asked my informants about race and racism in Tunisia. Saif, a young white Marazig man in Douz, stated that there is some racism in all parts of the country and always has been. He explained that it is just a part of human nature for people to be fearful of others who appear different in some way. Adel, a black professional musician in Tunis, stated that he has never experienced racism in any part of the country. He proudly added that he is a descendant of Sidi Saad, the well-known black Tunisian *marabout*, mentioned previously, who is associated with the *boussadia*. Adel said that he often tells people about his connection to Sidi Saad and added that they are always interested to hear about it. Youssef, whose grandparents were white Arabs from Libya, stated that he has great respect for blacks. He added that he believes they have magical powers and can see *djinn*; that is why, he added, real *boussadias* are black. Youssef stated that blacks are better musicians and are closer to the spirit world than non-blacks.

Youssef’s perspective is not unique. According to Jankowsky, “many Tunisians ascribe to black Africans a mysterious and powerful ability to manipulate the spirit world and to protect against misfortune” (Jankowsky 2010:17). Additionally, Zawadowski states that “the dark pigmentation of the Blacks seems to be an effective ‘scarecrow’ against evil spirits in North African popular magic. The presence of a black person at a family gathering is considered to bring good fortune, and, in the Tunisian Sahel a black person is intentionally

invited to attend wedding ceremonies in order to chase away the evil eye” (Zawadowski 1942:151). This is consistent with my informants’ explanation that a *boussadia* needs to be black in order to dispel *djinn*. As Jankowsky states, “the perception of otherness is inseparable from a mysterious power to bring good luck or misfortune” (Jankowsky 2010: 18). Despite the prejudice against blacks, many Tunisians believe that sub-Saharan black Africans have the ability to work with the spirit world (ibid.).

Sufism in Douz

Sufism, the mystical branch of Islam, has been a part of Tunisian society since the thirteenth century (see Al-Akhdar 1993). Although some authors have discussed the history and practices of Sufi orders in the country, there is no consensus on the position of Sufism in contemporary Tunisian society. In fact, it is barely discussed in the literature. Most authors agree that Sufi orders were active in Tunisia when the French colonization began in 1881, and continued to be an important force in the country until its independence in 1956. The first president of the republic, Habib Bourguiba, introduced numerous initiatives that reduced the role of religion in society. Sufi orders, Islamic schools, and brotherhoods worshipping local saints were suppressed. Zine el Abidine Ben Ali, who served as president from 1987 to 2011, did not officially change the government’s position on religion. Although my informants have expressed varying opinions on the current state and importance of Sufism in Tunisia, they all agree that Sufism is still recognized as a part of Tunisia’s spiritual legacy. As I discussed in Chapter 4, a small Qadiriya brotherhood still exists in Douz today; however, their existence and practices are kept extremely private.

The complex relationship between mysticism and festive practices is evident in the accounts of the *boussadia*. Some authors have suggested that *boussadias* are representations of *marabouts*. Even if the contemporary *boussadia* does not overtly express Tunisia’s Sufi heritage, the suggestion of the link to maraboutism by authors, the use of prayer beads as

costume accessories, and rhythmic body movements reminiscent of the Sufi practice of *dhikr* (remembrance of God) demonstrate some connection. The obliqueness of the association may, in fact, mirror Tunisia's relationship to Sufism. Citizens feel uncomfortable about discussing Sufism because of the rise of conservative Sunni Islam throughout Tunisia; they fear being shunned by friends and family if they appear overly interested in Sufism. On the other hand, many individuals are sincerely interested in Tunisia's mystical practices and *marabouts* because these are indelible parts of the country's history, culture, and heritage.

The *Boussadia* and Encounters with Contemporary Society

My informants in Douz were amused by my research on the *boussadia*. They consider the *boussadia* to be a form of entertainment at weddings and festive occasions that has no special meaning. However, the casual comments from my informants about the *boussadia*'s relationship to *stambeli*, black *marabouts*, Sufism, and sub-Saharan Africa suggest that there are connections. The *boussadia* is one of the last surviving reminders of these other histories in Douz. The *boussadia*, however, is not a static image; there have been adaptations to his image in order to reflect life in contemporary Douz.

Tunisians take great pride in their mobile phones, ATMs, satellite dishes, Internet connectivity, and technological achievements. I argue that the shards of credit cards, pieces of plastic from ephemeral technology, and bits of soda cans on *boussadia* costumes serves as a symbol of Tunisia's relationship to the contemporary world. These updates to the *boussadia* allow him to be more relevant to the lives of the current residents of Douz. This symbolic display also highlights the inequality that modernity brings. Access to technology, and the icons of modernity, has not resulted in greater access to gainful employment, increased quality of life, or class equality. I suggest that the credit cards, plastic pieces, and soda cans represent the fact that, although Tunisia (and the *boussadia*) may look somewhat different,

the struggles of Tunisian life (and the *boussadia*) fundamentally remain the same. I shared my observations with several of my informants in Douz, and none of them disagreed.

Although historians and Tunisians offer conflicting stories about the *boussadia*'s origins and significance, it is evident that both the accounts and the characteristics of the *boussadia* are connected to elements that are important to Tunisia's identity. *Boussadia* (and, as I will argue, snake charmer) performances at the Douz Festival depict components of identity that are not part of local discourse. Conversations in Douz about identity and heritage focus solely on Bedouin culture and Sunni Islam. The *boussadia*'s appearance at weddings and the festival is one of the few ways that the residents of Douz can engage with the black sub-Saharan and Sufi aspects of local heritage in a socially acceptable way.

As I have demonstrated in this discussion on the *boussadia* in Douz, his performance represents the relationship to sub-Saharan Africa, mystical practices, blackness, and the intersection of the historical past with contemporary Tunisia. The accounts of the *boussadia* provided by Aziza (1975), Ben Abdallah (1988), Hosni (1996), and Jankowsky (2010) all suggest that, even if the history and details are unclear, Tunisians believe that the story, music, costume, and dance emanate from sub-Saharan Africa. Furthermore, from the perspective of the *stambeli* community, the presence of the *boussadia* symbolically represents the translocation of black sub-Saharan Africans and their journey to Tunisia (Jankowsky 2010). For them, the *boussadia* is a reminder of the black slaves that settled in the country and the mystical traditions that they practiced.

As I have suggested in this discussion, the *boussadia* has connections to Sufism as well. Lièvre (2008) believes that the *boussadia* was originally intended to represent the black Sufi saint Sidi Saad. Additionally, the most popular song for the *boussadia*'s dance, "Sidi Mansour", is a supplication to the popular Tunisian Sufi saint named in its title. The repeated rhythmic pattern connected to his dance, the "*boussadia* rhythm," is associated with the

Sulamiya Sufi order and Sidi ‘Abd al-Salam al-Asmar, the black *marabout* previously discussed who was credited with the order’s revival.

The relationships between the *boussadia*, blackness, and black sub-Saharan Africa suggest that there are important aspects of local heritage in Douz that go unmentioned. The first of these relationships is the role of the *boussadia* in *stambeli* practices and the association between *stambeli* and Tunisia’s black community. Second is the recommendation that the name “*boussadia*” can be translated as “father of the blacks,” thus indicating a relationship to blackness on a local level that is not discussed. Third is the musical connection to the *boussadia* and three black *marabouts*, Sidi Mansour, Sidi ‘Abd al-Salam al-Asmar and Sidi Saad. Lastly are the accounts that describe, historically, the performer in the *boussadia* as black (Hosni 1996:145; Lièvre 2008:87). In local discourse, discussions of blackness are superseded by those about residents’ perspective on Islam and their Bedouin ancestors.

In contemporary Douz, the *boussadia*’s performance may initially appear to be a phantasmagoria from Tunisia’s past. However, I suggest that it has considerable meaning as a connection between the people, their historical relationships to black sub-Saharan Africa, Sufism, and *stambeli* traditions. Although the residents of Douz do not regularly engage with these elements discursively, they continue to put them on stage in the form of a *boussadia* as a festive representation of identity during the festival.

Snake Charming

Another practice, occasionally seen at weddings, that is a favourite at the Douz Festival is snake charming. I was able to witness snake charming at the Douz Festival in 2008, 2009, and 2010. My informants confirmed that it is indeed part of some wedding celebrations, especially among wealthier families who can afford the extra expense. However, I was never able to see a wedding in Douz with a snake charmer. Although the

residents of Douz have conflicting stories about the origins of the practice, the literature suggests that there are strong connections between snake charming and Sufi and black sub-Saharan communities. I demonstrate in this section that, like the *boussadia*, snake charming performances at weddings and at the festival represent the connection between Douz, Sufism, and black sub-Saharan Africa. This is despite the fact that the residents of Douz typically represent themselves in other ways, namely as contemporary Bedouins and pious Sunni Muslims. To begin this investigation I will return to the description of the activities at the Douz Festival.

Snake Charming at the 2009 International Festival of the Sahara

Here I revisit an ethnographic episode that I first described in Chapter 1. On the morning of the third day of the 2009 Douz Festival, the *souq* in the centre of town was filled with performers and listeners. A lively crowd had already surrounded the performance space claimed by Sonia the snake charmer and her troupe: a *zokra* player, 2 drummers, and an older male assistant, Hatem. As the band began playing, a lizard was removed from the large ornate chest that was situated next to the musicians. Sonia stroked the lizard, danced around the performance circle, and then placed it on her head. Next, she replaced the lizard in the chest and removed two scorpions. As she brought each scorpion out, she stroked its belly. She gave the scorpions to her assistant, who then put them near her ears. The scorpions were then removed and returned to the chest. Then cobras were brought out, one at a time, and each one was successively larger. As each one was brought out, she would place it on the ground with the tip of its tail under a piece of brick. She worked with each of the snakes using trance-inducing hand movements to control them. She also tapped the snakes to get them to spread their hoods. As each snake became more engaged with the dancer, she moved from one to another. Once all four of the snakes were out and aroused, the male assistant lay down very slowly between them. Although the music accompanying the lizards and

scorpions was the same, the music changed once the snakes were introduced. I will discuss the music for snake charming later in this chapter.

This festival performance attracted dozens of audience members. Onlookers were captivated for the entire performance, and were constantly vying for a better spot to see Sonia and Hatem. I was also fascinated by the performance, which was unlike anything I had seen in Douz. I asked many audience members and other informants about the origins and particulars of the performance; much of the information conflicted. This is a summary of their answers:

1. Some people said Sonia is the only person in Tunisia who does this.
2. Some people said that there are other snake charmers in the country, but not many.
3. It is based on Indian and Moroccan snake charming practices.
4. It is associated with black magic and power.
5. Some said that Sonia has been imbued with magical powers.
6. Some said she wears an amulet that is infused with *suwar* from the *Quran* for protection.
7. Some said Sonia recites *suwar* from the *Quran* for protection.
8. Some said that the music has no effect on the snakes, and is not necessary or special to snake charming.
9. Others said that the snakes either respond to the music or the vibrations of the music, and that there is special repertoire for snake charming.

The responses reflect a wide variety of preconceived notions about snake charming and the performers themselves. Fortunately, I was also able to get the performers' perspective. My informant Moez arranged for me to interview Hatem and Sonia at their home in Tataouine during a visit in May 2010. Hatem said he decided to become a snake charmer because it was the best option for him. He thought about becoming an electrician, but decided it would be too dangerous. He considered other options, but they did not pay well. This interested him, so he decided to do it. Starting around age seventeen, he would go out into the desert and collect animals. Hatem claimed he did not learn charming from anyone and did not personally know anyone else who did it. He asserted that it is not a local tradition. He said there are a couple of people who do it in Tozeur, at the zoo, and several others in the south. He is proud of the fact that he has trained Sonia, and he adamantly claims that she is the only

female charmer in the world. Hatem said that there was a Japanese female charmer, but she was bitten by a cobra and died. Hatem stated that it is better that Sonia does the charming because he got stung by a scorpion on his pinkie (which left it paralyzed) and sustained a serious bite on his abdomen. For both of them, this is their only job. Hatem and Sonia perform for festive events and weddings throughout the south. He said that families pay for charming at weddings; the *festivals* pay for *festival* performances. It appears that Hatem and Sonia are doing well financially. They had one of the nicest flats I had seen in southern Tunisia.

Hatem says there is no magic involved. He insisted that the lizards are not dangerous; on the contrary, they are very docile. He said he uses a special technique with the scorpions. He showed me how he sedates the scorpions by waving his hand over them. With the snakes, Hatem claimed it is purely a matter of concentration. They follow his hand movements and the shadows of the hand movements. Bricks are placed on the cobras' tails during performances, but he said the bricks are not really necessary and are used to make the spectators feel more comfortable.

The lizards, scorpions, and snakes do not respond to music, rhythm, or instruments, according to Hatem. The music is just part of the entertainment. He added, although there is "snake charmer" music, any music may be used. He claimed that the music is also a distraction and helps them concentrate. Hatem said that they do not use amulets, or say *suwar*; they only utter a brief "*bismillah*" (in the name of *Allah*) when they begin performing. He insisted that they do not have special powers, although people might think they do. He reiterated that it is all about concentration.

Hatem said that that no one has ever told him snake charming is *haram*. He added that you can be a good Muslim and a snake charmer. Anyone could be a snake charmer; there is

no stigma attached to it. He said no one questions his integrity or faith because of his profession.

Hatem said that snake charming is more common in Morocco, and the only snake charming school is in Marrakesh. The connection to the traditions in Marrakesh is explored in the discussion below.

Music for Snake Charming

Although Hatem and Sonia appeared to have little knowledge of the music associated with charming, Moez said that the music used is from the Sulamiya and Aïssâwa Sufi orders. He added that the music of these orders has long been associated with snake charming because it calms the snakes.

Unfortunately, the snake charmer literature does not offer much information on the music for snake charming. In his article on music in the Jma al-Fna, the central square of Marrakesh, Grame claims that the *bendir* is the only instrument that is necessary for snake charmers; the *ghaita* (or *zokra*) can be replaced by an end-blown flute, the *nay*, or omitted completely (Grame 1980:83). This reflects the practices represented in some of the photographic images of snake charmers in North Africa that I have seen.

My Tunisian informants were quite clear that there is no specific repertoire for snake charming. They said that although the snake might respond to rhythmic patterns or vibrations, as Miriam Robertson claims in her book on snake charming in India, they do not respond to specific melodies (Robertson 1998:104). According to Hatem and my informants, the music is really for the audience. This also appears to be the case in India. Robertson states that for Kalbelia snake charming “the tune played is often ‘Nagina’, music from the latest of the three versions of the hit film of the same name, where the story reflects the popular belief that cobras can assume human form” (ibid.).

The music during the snake charming at the Douz Festival consisted of a melodic line played by the *zokra* accompanied by repeated rhythmic patterns played by two drummers. Musicians in Douz described the melody in terms of the Arab modal system as *maqam ajam mi*², which contains the same pitches as the E major scale in the Western tonal system. The music that accompanies the beginning of the act, when the charmers perform with the lizards and scorpions, is different than the music that accompanies the “snake act”. The music for the “snake act” is faster, and the drummers have independent parts. A sample transcription can be found as Figure 13 below.

As soon as the scorpions were returned to the chest and the first snake was taken out, the musicians made a seamless transition from the “lizard/scorpion music” to the “snake music”. The faster tempo, and the introduction of the first snake, palpably increased the level of excitement amongst the audience.

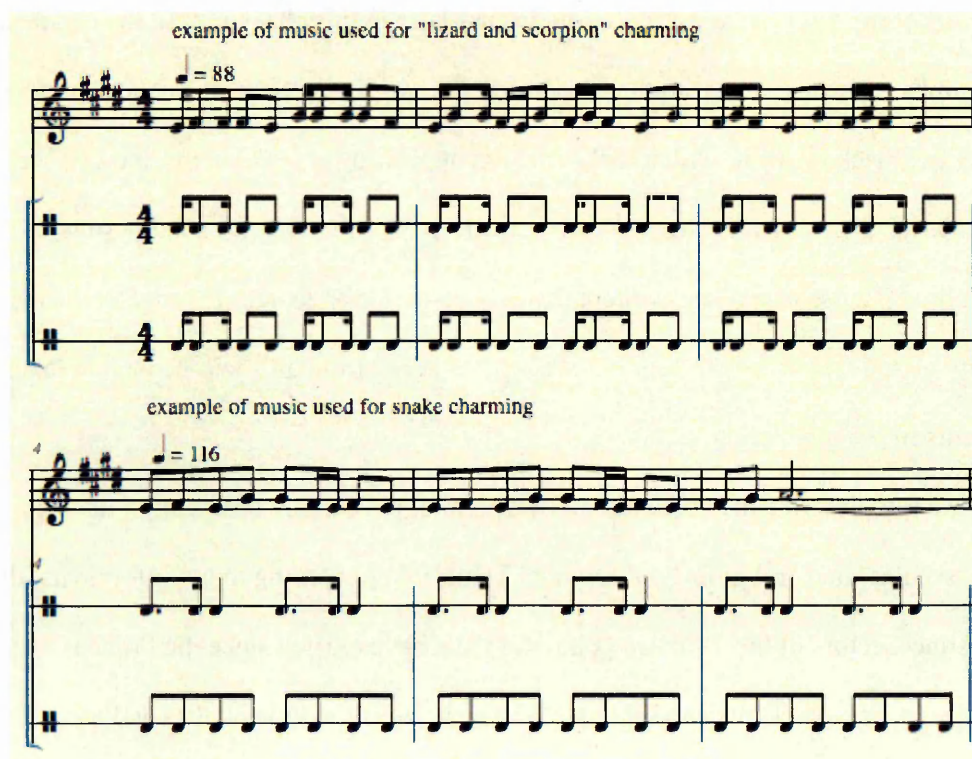


Figure 13. Examples of music used for lizard, scorpion, and snake charming; transcription by author of performances from 2009 Douz Festival.

² *Maqam ajam mi* may be translated as “the foreign mode starting on E”.

Snake Charming in Tunisia

The literature that specifically addresses snake charming in Tunisia and North Africa is extremely limited. When comparing contemporary performances to written accounts, the relationship between Tunisian and West African snake charming practices is evident, as I will discuss later in this chapter. In addition to the literature, I have found several images from the late nineteenth through the mid-twentieth century that provide insight into the snake charming practices in Tunis and southern Tunisia. Numerous photographs, postcards, and prints of Tunisian snake charmers are available on online auction websites. They offer a unique iconographic perspective on snake charming practices, even if some of them, particularly the postcards, may have been artificially staged and created for tourist consumption. Four generalizations about snake charmers in Tunisia between 1880 and 1948 can be deduced from these images. First, most Tunisian snake charmers use a *bendir* (frame drum) as part of their performance. As I will discuss later in this chapter, both the *bendir* and snake charming are associated with the Aïssâwa Sufi community. Second, snake charmers could be either black or white. Practitioners did not appear to come from one specific sector of the population. Third, snake charming was practiced in both the north and the south. There are photos from Tunis, as well as southern towns. Lastly, the audiences for snake charmers were highly varied and included men, women, and children from all socio-economic levels and segments of the population.

In order to describe the audiences in these photographs more accurately I have coined the terms “secular” and “religiously observant” Tunisians. According to my informants, there are two distinct sectors of the Tunisian population that have existed since the French Protectorate era. Secular Tunisians are those who wear Western-style clothes and are observant Muslims but practice a version of Islam that fits into their work and family life. They pray and go to the mosque when they can without interrupting their job or family

responsibilities, but they are not distressed when they miss prayers because of professional or family obligations. Religiously observant Tunisians are those who usually wear traditional Tunisian clothes and are strictly observant Muslims; the rhythms of their professional and family lives are based on their religious obligations. They use their traditional clothing in order to adhere to the Islamic code of modesty and as an outward marker of their piety. Performing the five-times daily prayer (*salat*), going to the Mosque as prescribed by Islam, and fulfilling all other practices detailed by the *Quran* or the *Hadith* (sayings and deeds attributed to the Prophet Mohamed) are their top priorities. Their professional and family lives conform to a daily pattern around these practices. I have coined these terms based on the descriptions provided by my informants during my fieldwork visits. Undoubtedly the conceptions of what is and is not *haram* may be subject to change through time, and the nature of secular and religiously observant Tunisians may have been different at the time the photos were taken. It is possible that the behaviours associated with these categories have changed over the last hundred years. My interpretations of these photographs are based on the feedback provided by my informants; undoubtedly other interpretations are possible.

Both secular and religiously observant Tunisians are present in these photographs. Because religiously observant Tunisians were audience members, I propose that they must have not considered snake charming *haram*. If it were, religiously observant Tunisians would not be in the audience. If they were watching the performance, but they considered it *haram*, they definitely would not be photographed in that setting for fear that they would be criticised by their peers. It is important to acknowledge that the secular Tunisians in the photographs might be tourists or French residents. I suggest that the acceptance of snake charming evidenced by these images and by contemporary performances is important, most critically because of its historical association with Sufi orders and black sub-Saharan Africa. An

approval of snake charming may indicate, on some level, an acceptance of Tunisia's connection with these facets of local heritage.

Three of these images in particular illustrate the three points outlined above. The first is an official U.S. Navy photograph from 1948 taken in Tunis by a staff photographer from the Harris and Ewing Studio in Washington, DC (Figure 14).



Figure 14. Photo of Tunisian snake charmer by Harris and Ewing Studio, 1948.

As mentioned above, a *bendir* is clearly visible in each of these photographs. In the image above there is a *bendir* to the left of the snake charmer, suggesting that it was part of his routine. This performance attracted a varied audience; visible in addition to the US servicemen are Tunisian children and men, both secular and religiously observant. Women appear in some of the images I encountered, but not all. The absence of women in the image is not surprising; some women consider it a violation of the Islamic code of modesty to be photographed by people outside of their family. Even though many of the images of snake charmers in Tunisia are from the 1880s and 1890s, this photograph is evidence that it was still practiced in Tunis in the late 1940s.

The next postcard (Figure 15, page 177), circa the 1920s, is from the town of Zarzis, on the southeast coast of Tunisia. Again, there is a *bendir* to the left of the charmer, indicating that this is a staple component of the act. His audience is a mix of children and

adults, both men and women. All the audience members are dressed in traditional “religiously observant” southern attire; both men and women are wearing outer garments in accordance with Islamic codes of modesty.



Figure 15. Postcard from Zarzis, Tunisia, from the 1920s.

In the following postcard from Tunis from the 1920s (Figure 16, page 178), it can be noted that, once again, the audience is varied. It includes children, men, and women—secular and religiously observant Tunisians. In addition to the fact that the *bendir* is part of the charmer’s act, it is important to point out that he is black. This suggests that snake charming was performed by both black and white members of society.

The fact that I found that these images are so readily available through online auction sites suggests that snake charming was a popular practice in Tunisia from the 1880s to the 1940s. The availability of snake charmer postcards and photographs might indicate a connection between snake charming and tourism, especially tourists from the West; however, Martelli states that the influx of foreign visitors did not begin until after Tunisia gained independence in 1956 (see Martelli 2005-2006). If the postcards and photographs were intended for the tourist market, it appears that that market would have been very limited. Nonetheless, I propose that acceptance of snake charming in Tunisia indicates that



Figure 16. Postcard from Tunis, Tunisia, from the 1920s.

citizens accepted the cultural and historical connections to Sufism and sub-Saharan black Africa associated with snake charming. A discussion of these connections appears below.

The literature related to snake charming reveals different facets of the practice. The relationship between snake charming customs in African and Mediterranean societies and African spirit possession cults, most notably *Bori*, is often explored (see Martino 1961). Jankowsky, in his study of *stambeli*, discusses the role of *Bori* in Tunisian society (see Jankowsky 2004). He refers to the accounts of Tremearne who asserted that *Bori* beliefs and practices might originate from sacrificial rites performed in Roman Carthage. These rites were brought to sub-Saharan Africa, and then back to North Africa by slaves (Jankowsky 2004:30-31). Tremearne added that the widespread worship of the snake throughout West Africa contributed to the snake's status in Hausa society. He briefly mentions a category of Hausa medicine men, the *Garde*, who are snake charmers who dress like women and wear long tufts of hair (Tremearne 1968:153). Collectively, these accounts suggest that there is a connection between *Bori* practices and snake charming in Tunisia.

The link between snake charming in North Africa and Hausa traditions is briefly mentioned in the literature on the Jma Al-Fna, the central plaza in Marrakesh in southern

Morocco. The Jma Al-Fna is the social and commercial heart of the city and is occupied by vendors, shoppers, visitors, and performers throughout the day. Articles by Theodore Grame (1970) and Philip Schuyler (1996) include accounts of snake charmers in their descriptions of Jma Al-Fna. Grame asserts that the practice of snake charming may be connected to pre-Islamic or Orphic³ traditions, and its ritual function may be related to Hausa practices, despite that fact that the music is Islamic in character. He cites one observer who states that members of the Aïssâwa Sufi brotherhood who practice snake charming have “submitted to the influence of Negro magic and religion” (Grame 1970:84).

According to Grame, members of the Aïssâwa brotherhood in Marrakesh charm snakes in the Jma Al-Fna both to demonstrate their mastery of snake charming and as an element of esoteric ritual (Grame 1970:81). Schuyler confirms that snake charmers in the Jma Al-Fna are both entertainers and “members of religious associations for which snake handling is a demonstration of faith” (Schuyler 1996:3). Grame claims that the group, founded by Sidi Muhammad Ben Aïssâ (born 1465-6), have “a deep devotion to serpents and scorpions, of which they regard themselves as protectors” and invoke Aïssâ at the beginning of performances (Grame 1970:82-83). Within particular Aïssâwa communities, women play the *bendir* and men dance with and handle the snakes and are “expected to bite off the heads of snakes and fill their mouths with scorpions” as part of their rituals (Grame 1970: 83). Grame and Schuylers’ articles reinforce the connection between North African snake charming and sub-Saharan practices.

While discussing snake charming practices, my informants Moez in Douz and Youssef in Tunis talked about the role of the *bendir*. Both mentioned that the *bendir* is the symbol of the Sulamiya and Aïssâwa Sufi communities in Tunisia because it is used during

³ Orphism is a set of religious beliefs and practices originating in Ancient Greece associated with the mythical poet Orpheus. The Orphic Egg, an image central to the religion, is often depicted with a snake wrapped around it.

all of their supererogatory rites. Another informant in Douz, Hassan, stated that the *bendir* is sometimes used in plays and musical theatre productions to indicate that a character is Sufi (see Chapter 3, pages 88-89).

Although some of the residents of Douz have mentioned that certain Sufi brotherhoods and black sub-Saharan communities practice snake charming, it does not detract from their enjoyment of Hatem and Sonia's shows at the festival. For these audience members, the festival would not be the same without the lizards, scorpions, and snakes. They see it as a captivating form of entertainment. Unfortunately, conversations with my informants about snake charming did not reveal meaningful information about the significance of snake charming in Douz. My *zokra* teacher Habib and his son Skander laughed when I asked about Hatem and Sonia and their act. Hedi said that they appear at the festival every year because the residents of Douz love them. He added that no one can explain why they are so popular.

Although the residents of Douz do not freely or openly equate snake charming with Sufism or black sub-Saharan Africa, in this chapter I have outlined the historical evidence suggesting that there is a connection. The link between Sufism and snake charming is explained by Grame and Schuyler. They describe the snake charming practices among the Aïssâwa Sufi brotherhood in Morocco. My informants have also discussed how the *bendir*, an instrument often used to accompany snake charming, is associated with the Sulamiya and Aïssâwa brotherhoods. The photographs and postcards described earlier in this chapter depict snake charmers with *bendirs*. The relationship between black sub-Saharan Africa and snake charmers is articulated by Martino and Treamearne. Both discuss the practice of *Bori* rites within the displaced black sub-Saharan community in Tunisia and how snakes and snake charming were part of those rites.

I suggest that, like the *boussadia*, the snake charmer represents facets of identity in Douz that residents do not often engage with discursively. This is because they feel that these facets—the connections to Sufism and black sub-Saharan Africa—are incompatible with the Bedouin and Sunni Islam image that is central to the identity of the town and its citizens. Although the residents of Douz do not often engage with these other aspects of local history discursively, they continue to include festive representations of them in the form of the *boussadia* and the snake charmer as part of wedding celebrations and the Douz Festival. It is a way of engaging with Sufism, *stambeli*, and sub-Saharan blackness that does not undermine their Bedouin and Sunni Islam self-image.

Conclusion

Wedding practices are key to the Douz Festival because weddings are essential parts of the town's social structure and community life. Weddings are the only rites of passage in which the larger community actively participates; they are events that highlight and reinforce the community's social and spiritual networks. As Witte and Nichols (2008) point out, weddings within the Abrahamic faiths remind citizens of man's covenant with God, affirm that couple's role in society, and perpetuates the religion (Witte and Nichols 2008:605). So, in Douz, wedding rites serve as symbols of faith.

The *zokra* bands, *jeffa* processions, and *nakh* are drawn from tradition and featured during the festival in order to depict the citizens of Douz and the Marazig as modern Bedouins while evoking their traditional and cultural heritage. The residents of Douz and visitors alike appreciate performances by the *boussadia* and the snake charmers. The Marazig consider these performers to be quintessential parts of the festival, but the discourse about these acts reveals ambivalence about what it means to be "from Douz." There are mystical and Sufi connections to the *zokra*, *nakh*, *boussadia*, and snake charming, and sub-Saharan links to the *boussadia* and snake charming. These practices suggest connections to traditions

that are unacknowledged parts of current Marazig identity. There are citizens of Douz who have ambivalent feelings about these links; however, they are all undeniably part of the town's heritage. Because of this, some connotations of these practices are disregarded since the residents want to be cast as moderate Sunni Muslims, and not associated with mystics, Sufis, or sub-Saharan Africa.

Chapter 7: International Performers at the Douz Festival and Cosmopolitanism in Douz

In 1967, the first president of the modern nation of Tunisia, Habib Bourguiba, visited the Douz Festival as an expression of support for the event and, in general, an acknowledgment of the South's cultural legacy. Bourguiba rarely attended cultural events during his tenure, so his participation was considered a significant gesture of support for the communities in the south. The "international" label was added to the festival's name in 1967 to correspond with Bourguiba's visit. Most likely this addition was one of the presidential directives to expand the country's visibility to the West. Since then, musicians from other countries have been invited to participate in the International Festival of the Sahara.

The Festival Committee always includes guest artists on the programme and the residents of Douz look forward to and expect their participation. In recent years this has included ensembles from Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, Italy, and Japan. This chapter explores the relationship between the festival, international performers, and the citizens of Douz. I suggest that the invitation for international performers to participate at the Douz Festival serves two functions. First, it helps to further define what *is* Marazig by highlighting what is different—what is *not* Marazig. Second, the participation and integration of international performers into the festival allows residents to project another image of Douz, namely that it is a Bedouin town with cosmopolitan citizens. The international component of the festival articulates to the rest of Tunisia, to foreign tourists, and to some degree the residents of Douz themselves that the town understands its role in the modern world and invites the citizens of that world to engage with it.

As I will discuss in this chapter, the residents of Douz are genuinely interested in people and practices from other cultures. This raises the question of why this engagement, which I see as cosmopolitanism, is an important facet of identity in Douz. It appears that cosmopolitanism is a vital aspect of identity in Douz, and Tunisia in general, as a result of

pro-Western social policies promoted by Presidents Bourguiba and Ben Ali (see Perkins 2014). Although in the literature cosmopolitanism is usually associated with economic positioning and aspirations, I demonstrate that it is seldom the case in Douz. I suggest that the cosmopolitanism there is the result of government policies and positions that transformed what it meant to be Tunisian after the protectorate era. However, as I describe later in this chapter, some of the young men in Douz enact their cosmopolitanism to befriend female European visitors for social and financial gain. In these cases cosmopolitanism can evidence certain kinds of positioning and aspiration even when it does not perform class distinctions.

Scenes from the Douz Festival

As I will illustrate in the three ethnographic scenes that follow, cosmopolitanism in Douz includes an appreciation of a wide spectrum of otherness that can be witnessed at the festival. I will explore the concept of the Other in detail later in this chapter; in brief it is anything that is not “of Douz.” Recognition of that distinction is critical to the concept of identity in Douz. I have divided the degrees of otherness into three categories, based on interviews and conversations with my informants. These were not categories and terms used by the residents themselves; I have devised them to better describe and analyse my observations. First is the “culturally proximate Other” category; performers from Morocco, Algeria, Libya, and Egypt are included in this group. Although the residents of Douz discuss the similarities between Tunisia and these countries, their cultures are still perceived as being somewhat different. Second is the “geographically proximate Other” category. These performers do not have to travel far to participate in the Douz Festival, but their acts stand in stark contrast to those of local artists. For example, although Italy and Tunisia are close geographically, the performances by Italian artists reflect very different cultural practices. Lastly, other guest performers at the festival play the role of the “exotic Other”—performers who are neither from North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, nor Europe. The fact that the

residents of Douz enthusiastically receive all of them makes the residents appear to be cosmopolitan and well versed in the world's musical traditions. The following scenes from the festival illustrate this.

During the closing ceremonies of the 2010 Douz Festival, crowds gathered at *Place 7 Novembre* to see the final performances of the groups invited to this year's event. Among the *zokra* bands and dancers was a music and dance troupe from Morocco. The *zokra* player and drummers of the group stood to the side, while twelve dancers wearing black *djellabas* (outer robes) performed a variety of dances with plywood swords. The dancers were divided into two groups of six. One group lined up on stage left, the other on stage right, and each dancer rhythmically hit the sword of a dancer from the other group as they whirled across the stage. Once all the dancers arrived on the opposite side of the stage from whence they came, they started again. This was followed by a "duel": one dancer from each group proceeded to the centre of the "stage" to engage in a playful mock battle—each sword strike rhythmically corresponding to the music. Lastly, the entire ensemble came together for a circle dance. The musicians played throughout the performance. Although I could not identify the melodies or the rhythms, the repertoire sounded remarkably similar to what I have heard in Douz. This performance was held at the end of the festival and many of the international tourists had already left Douz. However, dozens of local residents stayed and gathered to watch this group, and applauded enthusiastically at the end of their show, thus demonstrating an appreciation for an Other that is already somewhat familiar. This troupe exemplifies the "culturally proximate Other" category.

After the opening ceremonies at *Place 7 Novembre* during the 2009 festival, crowds and performers moved to the stage area in the *souq*. One of the areas featured a small stage made out of plywood, reinforced by PVC tubing. Several local acts took the stage, including a local *zokra* band and a troupe of women dancers from a neighbouring town. At the end of

the set, a folkloric music and dance troupe from Italy entered. Without an introduction, four middle-aged couples gracefully walked up the stairs to the makeshift stage, accompanied by an accordion player of roughly the same age. They were dressed in starched white shirts and colourful silk and velvet trousers, skirts, and waistcoats with elaborate embroidery. The ensemble performed several sets of traditional Italian couple and circle dances within their allocated time. Although I do not have a vast knowledge of Italian folk dance genres, I was occasionally able to identify the telltale rhythmic patterns and 6/8 meter of the *tarantella*. The dances, performed confidently and gracefully, kept the audience transfixed for the length of the performance; no one attempted to move except to try to get closer to the stage. The area around the stage was surrounded by audience members, mainly residents of Douz, ten to twelve rows deep. Small children were pushed to the front of the crowd, and most viewers were recording the performance on their mobile phones. The crowd burst out in enthusiastic applause after every set. Later that day at *Place H'nich*, the troupe performed the same dances again as part of the “invited international guests” portion of the programme. They received tremendous applause, both before and after their performance. This highlights the notion of the “geographically proximate Other.” Although Italy is very close to Tunisia geographically¹, many of their cultural practices are very different.

At the afternoon opening ceremonies at *Place H'nich* in December 2008, the *zokra* bands, camels and their riders, the *jeffa* procession, and all the other performers gathered in the stretch of desert in front of the audience. After the multi-lingual welcome extended by the announcer in the *Place*'s stadium, he gave a special mention to the festival's international guests. Among the first performances was a small Japanese *taiko* drum ensemble of eight performers dressed in customary *taiko* attire: white robes with red sashes. The ensemble quickly moved to the space right in front of the audience, and offered a five-minute vignette

¹ Italy is regarded as a possible destination for migration; however, there is not much movement of this kind out of Douz.

performance, as all the guest ensembles do. After the performance, the announcer reminded the audience that the ensemble had come all the way from Japan, and invited the audience to welcome and thank them with an enthusiastic round of applause. This emphasis on both the distance travelled and the appreciation of another culture suggests a sincere openness to other traditions and highlights the sense of cultural receptivity found in Douz. This is what I postulate as being the “exotic Other.” This performance presents cultural practices that are strikingly different from those in Douz.

Cosmopolitanism (not Cultural Omnivorism) in Douz

The residents of Douz are enthusiastic audiences for the international acts that participate in the festival. Typically, these ensembles perform folkloric and popular genres of music from Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Arab World. My informants have also stated that, outside of the festival, they enjoy watching music and dance performances from around the world throughout the year via television and the Internet. I argue that this openness to world cultures serves two functions. First, being “cosmopolitan” is yet another facet of identity in Douz. Although the residents take great pride in their Bedouin and Muslim heritage, they feel it is important to be aware of the world around them. Second, the residents of Douz use this openness to the world to construct a generalized image of the Other. It is easier to define what it means to be “of Douz” after observing and assessing the cultural practices that exist outside of Douz. In order to explain these points in greater detail, I draw from the literature on cosmopolitanism and cultural omnivorism.

Much of the literature on cosmopolitanism approaches the topic from sociological, political, economic, and philosophical perspectives. Invoking theories of globalization and transnationalism, authors describe the ways in which cultures and their citizens have changed in response to patterns of migration, tourism, commerce, and technology. There is no widely accepted definition of cosmopolitanism and the use of the term itself is debated in the

literature (Roudometof 2005:113). Most definitions describe it as an orientation of openness to foreign individuals and cultures (Skrbis et al. 2004; Beck 2006; Beck and Sznaider 2006; Szerszynski and Urry 2006; Delanty 2009; Saito 2011). Many scholars (e.g., Skrbis et al 2004; Szerszynski and Urry 2006; Saito 2011) refer to the definition proposed by Ulf Hannerz, which will serve as the working definition for this thesis. He describes cosmopolitanism as “an orientation, a willingness to engage with the Other ... an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness toward divergent cultural experiences” (Hannerz 1990:239). Saito adds that since “divergent cultural experiences” involve encounters with both foreign people and their practices, “a willingness to engage with the Other” necessitates openness to both foreign others and cultures (Saito 2011:125). In conversations among my informants, rarely do they critique international performers or compare them to local performers. In those rare circumstances, informants have said something similar to, “that was not my favourite act.” In fact, my informant Moez expressed those sentiments about the Italian folkloric troupe described above. When I invited him to elaborate he added, “I enjoyed it, I wanted to watch it, but, other acts were better.” His comments appeared to focus on execution rather than style. Comparative cosmopolitanism does not mean that an audience member may not critically evaluate a performance; it is an effective description of the open-minded and positive reception of music from other cultures that is evident in Douz during the festival and throughout the year.

Both Thomas Turino and Steven Feld have written about cosmopolitanism from an ethnomusicological perspective, and have suggested that cosmopolitanism can take on many forms and can be interpreted in different ways. As Turino states “by its nature, cosmopolitanism is eclectic, always combining cultural resources and habits from various sites within the formation, as well as unique aspects of a specific locale” (Turino 2008:138).

I agree with this perspective; however, as I will describe below, both Turino and Feld's encounters with cosmopolitanism have been different than mine.

In *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation*, Turino discusses musical cosmopolitanism in Zimbabwe. He describes how British and North American presentational (concert) music became popular in Zimbabwe after the arrival of British colonizers and European and North American missionaries at the end of the nineteenth century (ibid.:122). He explains how Western presentational music transformed local music scenes and how indigenous Shona music influenced the concert music that emerged in Zimbabwe after colonization. At the core of his argument is the idea that cosmopolitanism is fundamentally a constellation of transstate ideas and practices (or habits, as Turino describes them) that are not traced to any specific homeland (ibid.:118). Turino adds that "the most prominent cosmopolitan cultural formation in the world today was spread by European and U.S. colonialism; it is defined by habits of thought and practice derived from a combination of Christianity and capitalist ethos and practices under the umbrella discourse of modernity" (ibid.).

Although the combination of Christianity and the capitalist ethos is not principally responsible for cosmopolitanism in Tunisia, I do agree with Turino's suggestion that there is a relationship between colonialism and cosmopolitanism in former colonial nations. The types of festivity in Douz (and Tunisia more broadly, including the various secular and public forms of festivity I discuss in Chapters 3 and 4) are similar to the presentational forms of music making Turino shows to have been adopted in Zimbabwe. Secular *festivals* like the one in Douz are cosmopolitan genres of festivity that circulated globally alongside colonialism and capitalism. Nineteenth-century ways of presenting difference and selfness—such as world fairs—circulated globally make the Douz Festival possible (see De Groote 2005).

In *Jazz Cosmopolitanism in Accra: Five Musical Years in Ghana*, Feld explores how Ghanaian musicians have responded to jazz, focusing in particular on how three musicians and an ensemble based in Accra have reinterpreted the music of John Coltrane. At the core of Feld's work is an exploration of the relationship between "African urban modernity and the Black Atlantic diaspora" (Hager 2013:737; Feld discusses *The Black Atlantic* by Paul Gilroy (1993)) and the idea that cosmopolitanism focuses on "the agency of desire for enlarged spatial participation. That agency plays out in performances and imaginaries of connectedness" (Feld 2012:48). For Feld, musical cosmopolitanism is about the connections (intended and unintended as well as recognized and misrecognized) between the musics of different cultures.

Indeed, it appears that cosmopolitanism in Douz is, in part, about "imaginaries of connectedness", as Feld describes. My informant Belgecem talked about his experiences listening to the blues, and hearing similarities between it and sub-Saharan African music and the folkloric music of Douz. For Belgecem, it seemed to create a web of connectivity for him between sub-Saharan Africa, America, and Douz. Another informant, Skander, is fascinated by classical Turkish music. As a wedding musician, he states that sometimes he will add a Turkish-sounding phrase to a song because he likes the way it sounds. When I asked him about his interest, he explained that Turkey and Tunisia have always had a connection; Tunisia was part of the Ottoman Empire and both countries are examples of modern Islamic democracies. He suggested that his openness to Turkish music is a sort of personal exploration of the connections between Turkey and Tunisia; an exploration of two similar traditions. For some residents of Douz, an openness to the music of other Arab countries, Western Europe, North American, sub-Saharan Africa, and Asia appears to be a way to invoke a spirit of connectedness to the Other.

While trying to understand the openness to the Other in Douz, I also consulted the literature on cultural omnivorism in order to explore other theoretical frameworks for my observations. Sociologists have most often used the term cultural omnivorism to describe groups of upper-middle-class people in the West who perform their class distinction in a heretofore-unexpected way, namely by appreciating everything. These individuals consume “highbrow”, “middlebrow”, and “lowbrow” culture (see Gans 1974) and attend hip-hop, blues, and classical music concerts, go to folk festivals and operas, as well as exhibitions of tattoo art. Much of the literature pertaining to cultural omnivorism focuses on the relationship between socio-economic status, taste and consumption (Gans 1974; Bourdieu 1984; Peterson 1992, 1997, 2005; Peterson and Simkus 1992; Peterson and Kern, 1996; Emmison 2003; Ollivier 2008). I did observe this in Tunis, where affluent citizens frequently attended performances of Western art music, jazz, and popular music in a folk-like idiom (e.g., Bob Dylan and Joni Mitchell). Appreciation of these musical styles appeared to be associated with “good taste” and a high level of cultural sophistication. However, this was not the case in regards to cultural consumption in Douz since, based on my informants’ description and my observations, there was no relationship between consumption and social status. In order to explain why, I will provide a description of family life and socio-economic processes in Douz.

Based on my observations and my informants’ descriptions, Douz is extremely homogenous socio-economically. Education is compulsory for everyone through age sixteen; however, most students continue and complete their secondary school education at age eighteen. Even though university education is free in Tunisia, very few students go because the employment prospects for graduates are bleak. After completing their secondary education, graduates navigate through the extensive network of family and friends in order to find a job. Many young men work in the construction, agriculture, motorcycle repair, and

tourism industries. Some men find work in family-owned businesses. Some young women stay at home and help run the household until they get married. Others find a job in retail, offices or the service and hospitality sector.

During several years of fieldwork visits I asked most of my informants about wages. The consensus in 2013 was that a good job in Douz would pay approximately TND 350 monthly (£130). Per diem workers in the agricultural and tourism sectors could expect an average of TND 10 (£4) daily. My informants suggested that doctors, lawyers, and prosperous business owners could earn as much as TND 850 monthly (£315). They added that the average family could survive on TND 300 monthly (£112).

Some residents, especially university-educated ones, leave Douz in order to find more lucrative job opportunities. One informant, Saif, a twenty-nine year old with a Master's degree in English pedagogy, left Douz five years after completing his degree. The best teaching job he could get in Douz was a part-time one in a pre-school programme for TND 150 (£56) a month. In 2012 he went to Tripoli, Libya, and secured a high paying job as a hospital orderly.

Extended families often live together in compounds, sharing domestic responsibilities and resources. Most homes in Douz include three or four bedrooms, a living room, a kitchen, a bathroom, and a central open-air courtyard. Parents, grandparents, children and their spouses and children will live in this space. Homes are passed down from generation to generation. It is very rare to see a home or property for sale and it is virtually impossible to buy real estate in Douz.

Within this extended family compound, it is common for two or three family members to work in order to support the family. One family that I worked with included a mother, a daughter, three sons, and one daughter-in-law. The father, an agricultural labourer, had died in 2012. The younger sons, twenty-seven and twenty-eight years old, have only

been able to find temporary work as agricultural labourers or as tour guides. The oldest brother, thirty-year old Aziz, supported the entire family. He passed the civil service exam in his early twenties and secured a job with the desert border patrol. By Douz standards, the family leads a comfortable life. The home has all the basic amenities including a television with a satellite dish and a computer with an Internet connection. Family economic situations like this are common.

Based on my observations, ninety-five percent of the residents fit into the same socio-economic level. There is no abject poverty because of financial support from extended family networks. Families that are financially advantaged do not exhibit it. For example, one informant's sister married the owner of a prosperous telecommunications business. They invite me over for dinner every time I am in Douz. Their house, furniture, clothes, and meals are similar to those of any other resident whom I have visited. When I asked my informant about their wealth he explained that the few wealthy residents of Douz do not flaunt their success because it is part of the Bedouin and Muslim code of conduct. He added that not only is it important to cover your body as an act of modesty, it is also an act of modesty not to publicly disclose good fortune or bad fortune. Ultimately, he stated, these things are the will of *Allah* and people respect that.

My informant Belgecem explained that there are not any extremely rich individuals or families in Douz because excessive wealth does not exist in the South. He added that even the most successful businessmen, professionals, musicians, and writers in Douz – the top five percent – are not really wealthy. When these individuals earn money, they ensure that their extended family members are well provided for rather than buy cars, large homes, electronics, and jewellery. Belgecem stated that things are very different in the North. In the North, where investments from wealthy Gulf Arab States over the last thirty years have created a class of wealthy Tunisians. Since natural resources and business opportunities are

limited in the south, he added, investors from the Gulf States are not interested in investing here.

Based on my observations and interviews with informants, social status in Douz is not determined by economic factors but by family size and perceptions of piety. People from large families, especially the head of household with many male children, are afforded high social standing because the presence of many young men in the family ensures the family's long-term financial stability. My *zokra* teacher, an agricultural worker with five sons and four daughters, was highly regarded in Douz. Not only do his five sons and the anticipated income from their jobs ensure the family is successful, but the extended family, which includes the four sons-in-law, does as well.

Piety, however, is probably a more important factor for establishing social standing in Douz. I observed that residents are well regarded and are granted high social standing by friends and family if they are perceived to be pious. This includes performing *salat* (five-times daily prayer) at the prescribed time, going to the mosque for the Friday congregational *jumu'ah* prayers, fasting during *Ramadan*, abstaining from alcohol, and dressing and behaving modestly in public. Perception is key. One informant with high social standing in Douz admitted that he drinks alcohol, does not always perform *salat*, and does not go to *jumua'ah* prayers often. However, he is able to maintain his status because his friends and family think he is a devout Muslim.

According to my male and female informants, women are as cosmopolitan as men in their consumption of commodities and culture. During interviews and casual discussions, my informants often mentioned the Code of Personal Status, the Tunisian laws establishing women's rights that came into effect in 1957 under the guidance of Bourguiba. They stated that although men and women have traditional roles in the South—men work outside of the home while women raise children and maintain the household—men and women listen to the

same music, go to the same performances, and watch the same television programmes. Only one informant, Belgecem, suggested, “women like romantic songs more than men do; they especially like the songs written by Mohamed Abdel Wahab.”²

Thus, since economic standing is not the preeminent determinant of social status, I argue that the “openness to other cultures” in Douz is not cultural omnivorism, the performance of class distinction through the consumption of all types of culture practices, but instead cosmopolitanism, a willingness to engage with the Other. So, the question remains as to the reason for and function of cosmopolitanism in Douz if it is not directly related to social standing or aspirations. I suggest that the explanation lies in the social policies instituted by President Bourguiba in the years immediate after independence, and then the policies that followed under President Ben Ali. Not only was Bourguiba fascinated with Europe and the West, but also the governmental and social institutions he initially established after independence mirrored Western ones (Jourchi 1999:116-117). In a *Time* magazine article on Tunisia from 2 December 1957, Bourguiba is quoted as saying “Basically and profoundly, we are with the West” (*Time* 2 December 1957:22-23). Bourguiba was an extremely charismatic figure in Tunisia, and it appears that his cosmopolitan ideology became part of the national consciousness and is the reason for the cosmopolitanism found in Douz and throughout Tunisia. Bourguiba’s influence was very visible following the revolution of 2011. Some of my older informants—those that remember Bourguiba’s presidency—commented on the lasting value of his social policies and their importance for post-revolution Tunisia. They added that his policies on women’s rights, the role of religion in society, social welfare, and alignment with the West would be critical for a new government’s success. Just as Bourguiba instilled the idea among Tunisians that “We are all Tunisian”—Arabs, Jews,

² Abdel Wahab (1907-1991) was a celebrated Egyptian singer and composer, and acted in several movies. His songs are frequently performed and re-recorded throughout the Arab world.

white, and black—I believe that his vision and policies that aligned Tunisia with the West led to the general sense of cosmopolitanism present throughout the country. When President Ben Ali assumed power in 1987, he promoted the pro-Western ideology while embracing the country's Arab identity (Sorkin 2001:25-29).

Many of my informants regularly attributed contemporary attitudes to the impact of the Bourguiba era. Anouar credited Bourguiba with establishing policies that allow the free practise of religion in Tunisia. He added that this freedom is rare in the Arab world, and is the reason why Jewish and Sufi communities have survived. Amel suggested that Bourguiba's position on women's rights, although not comprehensive enough, was groundbreaking for North Africa and is a model for other African countries today. Belgecem, as a professional educator, credits the success of Tunisia's educational system to Bourguiba's policies. He added that Bourguiba understood how the European model of education could be adapted so that young Tunisians could receive the benefits of a Western schooling without losing the cultural and religious education that had been central to the national curriculum.

President Bourguiba's previously mentioned 1967 visit to the opening ceremonies of the Douz Festival was a monumental one. Not only was it the first time a Tunisian head of state had attended the festival, but it also marked the festival's transition to becoming an "international" one. Based on an initiative and proclamation by Bourguiba, the festival began featuring performances by local artists as well as those by invited guests from around the world. The new international image for the festival reflected Bourguiba's broader vision—to be part of the West. It appears that cosmopolitanism in Douz remains as a part of Bourguiba's pro-West legacy. Bourguiba's cosmopolitan vision for Tunisia created an atmosphere of acceptance of and interest in Western heritage. It is because of this that Tunisians maintain openness to other cultures.

Otherness at the Douz Festival

The Other is anything that is not “of Douz”, and recognition of that distinction is critical to the notion of identity in Douz. Sometimes there are slight cultural differences that residents consider to be Other, but not drastically so, as in the case of my informant Belgecem. He described a visit to Morocco he had taken many years ago. He explained that he encountered many familiar things: food, clothing, landscape, religion, music, and architecture. However, he said that it was impossible to communicate in Arabic. Moroccan Arabic is very different from Tunisian Arabic, so he relied on French instead. Belgecem added that Morocco has been influenced more profoundly than Tunisia by sub-Saharan black African culture. He suggested that the music, language, and the acceptance of Sufism in Morocco are all a result of the migration of black Africans from sub-Saharan Africa to Morocco. The differences between Tunisian and Moroccan culture as articulated by Belgecem illustrate the basic otherness that the residents of Douz see in Moroccan culture.

As outlined at the beginning of this chapter, the Moroccan performers at the Douz Festival occupy a category I describe as “culturally proximate Others”. There are many aspects of their performances that are familiar to the residents of Douz. The musical ensemble is identical to those found in the *Nefzaoua*; however, the repertoire they play is decidedly different. The black *djellabas* worn by the performers can be found in the traditional clothing shops in the *souq* of Douz. However, it is the detail of the dance that marks this troupe as Moroccan. In particular, it is the props that encapsulate the distinction of otherness. The men of Douz perform a similar warrior dance, the *raqs mayzy*. However, it is with sticks or rifles, not swords. For the residents of Douz, the sticks and rifles are symbols of the brave and heroic Bedouin. According to the Marazig, these have been their weapons for generations and represent the strength and bravery of their men. Rifles are fired at weddings and festive events as masculine symbols of joy, just as women sound their

ulations at joyous occasions. Sticks are used by Marazig shepherds to direct and control their flocks and ward off invading dogs. Although the plywood swords used by the Moroccan dancers are clearly meant to represent the same token of masculinity and rugged, pastoral nomadism, the residents of Douz contend that the swords and the dancers are not Marazig. And so, although closely similar, these Moroccan warriors are the Other.

Michael Harbsmeier states that every culture has its Other, its “own barbarians, heathens, unbelievers, savages, primitives of whatever specific ‘counter-concepts’” (Harbsmeier 1985, 273). The residents of Douz see many connections between Moroccans and themselves in such areas as religion, geography, colonial history and language. However, they also see significant differences that, while not as uncultured, severe, or problematic as Harbsmeier suggests, do create identity distinctions. Moroccans speak a different dialect of Arabic, have a monarchy rather than a democracy, and they embrace relationships to Sufism, mysticism, and black Africa. As discussed in previous chapters, the residents of Douz reject Sufism and mysticism, and by these characteristics alone would consider Moroccans to be the Other. However, from the perspective of the residents of Douz, the differences outlined above are all markers of otherness and highlight what is Marazig and what is Moroccan. (My informants never discussed local identity as a kind of Tunisian identity.) Perceptions of selfhood were always positioned in terms of what is “of Douz” and what is not). According to James Duncan, “binary oppositions between us and them serve the dual purpose of reinforcing and defining group identity while simultaneously ordering complex difference into a simpler, homogeneous entity which is more easily appropriated” (Duncan 1993:44). Although the difference may not be clearly visible to the festival’s international visitors, the residents of Douz recognize that they are different from the Moroccan performers.

The question becomes why is the exhibition of difference important? Stuart Hall (1997) states that, based on Ferdinand de Saussure’s linguistic model, “difference matters

because it is essential to meaning” (Hall 1997:234). He explains, “we know what *black* means, Saussure argued, not because there is some essence of ‘blackness’ but because we can contrast it with its opposite—*white*” (ibid.). At the Douz Festival, we can understand what is Marazig by putting it in juxtaposition with what is different. Everyone sees that the Moroccans are different because their dances feature swords, not sticks and rifles. They observe that the Italian folklore troupe performs mix-gendered couples dances; Marazig dances would never feature men and women dancing together because of the cultural norms regarding socializing between sexes. Performances by the *taiko* drummers are obviously different because of their drums, costumes, and rhythmic patterns. Drawing upon Mikhail Bakhtin, Hall suggests, “we need ‘difference’ because we can only construct meaning through a dialogue with the ‘Other’” (ibid.:235). Bakhtin (1981 [1935]) suggested meaning is created through, and is a response to this dialogue with the Other. I argue that the Douz Festival is the venue where this dialogue occurs; Marazig identity is (re)constructed when it interacts with the Other. Lastly, Hall claims, “culture depends on giving things meaning by assigning them to different positions within a classificatory system. The marking of ‘difference’ is thus the basis of that symbolic order which we call culture ... binary oppositions are crucial for all classification” (Hall 1997:236). Thus, the musical culture of Douz is established by labelling some repertoires as Marazig and all others as different. The Douz Festival is a public display of these binary oppositions.

There does not appear to be tension between keeping alterity at arm’s length at the Douz Festival and the presence of a cosmopolitan ‘openness to divergent cultural experiences’. Many of my informants consume Western European and North American media throughout the year, and have stated that, given the opportunity, they would attend performances of Western music, dance, and drama. However, such opportunities are not available outside of the festival. Overall, there does not appear to be a need to keep the

otherness that appears at the festival as a safe and benign alterity. The Secretary General of the festival explained that he would allow anyone to participate in the festival as long as they are able to pay their own travel expenses. Abdelati, a former festival director, agreed, but added that the festival committee, and some audience members from Douz, are uncomfortable when Sufi groups perform because they consider Sufism to be *haram*. My informants have also suggested that, indeed, acts seen as *haram* might make them uncomfortable and yet they are still interested in watching them. This is a prime example of an occasional tension that exists between cosmopolitanism and morality in Douz.

In addition to serving as a venue for entertainment by the Other, the Douz Festival enacts a form of tourism that allows audience members, both international and from Douz, to encounter the cultural practices of the Other—people who, in some way, are perceived of as different. From a Tunisian perspective, Italy is a special type of Other. Geographically, Italy is the European country closest to Tunisia. During the months after the Arab Spring, many Tunisians took refuge on boats headed to Lampedusa, the small Italian island just 113 kilometres from the Tunisian coast. Tunisians perceive Italians as their Mediterranean neighbours. Many Italians visit Tunisia, buy property in the country, and marry Tunisians. Some Tunisian young men are eager to befriend female Italian visitors for social and financial gain. Often these young men are given gifts of money, jewellery, and cars for their services as guides, companions, and escorts. Additionally, many of these young men aspire to find Italian women to marry in order to qualify for a passport from a country within the European Union. In these cases, cosmopolitanism is a form of aspiration toward a better economic status. Most Tunisians have access to Italian media through cable television or satellite dishes. Despite the familiarity, Italy is still understood as the Other. In addition to the myriad cultural differences, Italians speak a different language and practice another religion. The performance by the Italian music and dance troupe brings the “familiar

difference” of Italian culture to Douz. According to Jane Desmond, “live performers not only authenticate these packaged differences; they also offer the possibility of contact with them. The co-existence—sharing the same time and place—of the audience and the performers is essential to these industries [cultural tourism]” (Desmond 1999:xv). For the Douz Festival, it is performances like these that make the festival truly international. Desmond adds, “these shows stage the ‘them,’ the specificity of difference” (Desmond 1999:xv).

Audience members from Douz easily labelled the music and dances presented by the Italian folkloric troupe as a performance by the Other. Several of my informants saw the performance and thoroughly enjoyed it. They commented on the lively music, the costumes, and the precision of the dance. Some of them added that this international component of the festival is important because it shows that Douz and its citizens are worldly and opened-minded. One informant, Belgecem, added that “just because we live in Douz doesn’t mean we do not appreciate what the rest of the world does.”

The enthusiastic reception of the performance by the *taiko* drummers described at the beginning of this chapter illustrates how the residents of Douz paint a more complex picture of their identity—one that depicts Douz not only as a traditional Bedouin town, but as a cosmopolitan Tunisian one as well. Although the residents of Douz take great pride in their Bedouin identity, they also promote the town’s engagement with the Arab world, Africa, Asia and Europe through the festival. Jasper Chalcraft *et al.* state that, “musical festivals are often spaces where a cosmopolitan gaze, feeling, and attitude develop” (Chalcraft *et al.* 2011:26). Although the Douz Festival focuses on Marazig practices and most of the audience members are from Douz, there are always enough international acts and visitors to create a sense that it is an international *festival*. The international acts at the Douz Festival are used to articulate to guests that Douz is a part of the global community, and it is fully engaged with the world around it. As previously discussed, Feld suggests that musical cosmopolitanism

evokes “imaginaries of connectedness” (Feld 2012:48). The international acts at the Douz Festival allow residents to envision their connections to the music and people of different cultures.

The expression of cosmopolitanism is an important part of the articulation and negotiation of identity at the Douz Festival. From a broad perspective, Pauline Kleingeld and Eric Brown state that cosmopolitanism is “the idea that all human beings, regardless of their political affiliation, are (or can and should be) citizens in a single community ... a universal community of world citizens” (Kleingeld and Brown 2013). The fact that performers from around the world are invited to participate in the Douz Festival, and that the local audiences embrace their performances, expresses the fact the residents of Douz see themselves not only as Marazig Bedouins, but as citizens of the world who appreciate and welcome all forms of artistic expression.

Motti Regev’s article on issues of the local and global in film festivals addresses the intersection of festivals, identity, and cosmopolitanism. His argument is useful for articulating what happens at the Douz Festival (Regev 2011:108-123). Regev highlights the challenges that artists from small countries, such as his own Israel, face in participating in and responding to the international artistic community and why international festivals are important for small countries. He states, “Festivals serve the quest of certain collective and individual actors ... for status and self-identification as equal participants in what they perceive as the innovative frontiers of world culture” (ibid.:108). Marazig performers at the Douz Festival are “actors”—they are on the frontstage from a Goffmanian perspective—participating in an event that identifies them as Marazig and Bedouin. Their performance marks their Marazig-ness and Bedouin-ness while their attendance at international guest artists’ performances suggests their “openness to the world” and their cosmopolitanism. Marazig performers offstage—often wearing the same costumes they wore onstage—and

Marazig audience members are both “actors” in a sense, since many tourists know they are from Douz and understand that the entire town is transformed into a theatre for the festival.

The residents of Douz are cosmopolitan consumers outside of the festival as well. I have observed this whenever I visit the home of my informant Belgecem, a fifty-eight year old secondary school headmaster. He invites me to his house for tea and to watch television every evening when I am in Douz. Although everyone in Douz has a satellite dish, he is pleased that he can offer me access to American, British, French, Italian, Egyptian, and *Khaliji* (Persian Gulf) channels. When Belgecem invites me over for daytime visits on his rooftop terrace for tea, he pulls out his well-used shortwave radio or CDs of Libyan and Egyptian music for our entertainment. His living room is filled with magazines and newspapers from Tunisia, Great Britain, France, and the United States. Belgecem is not alone in his international affinities. My informant Skander, a twenty-five year old wedding band musician, peruses the Internet on a daily basis, looking for new and interesting music and videos. Although his primary interest is in Turkish music, he is well versed in trends from the Arab world and Continental Europe. My informant Saif (see page 192) is always searching for international books, magazines, and newspapers in Arabic, French, or English. He is a curious and voracious reader, and unfortunately, the only options in Douz are the Tunisian daily newspapers and textbooks. There are no bookstores in Douz; the closest is four hours to the north in Sfax. Ali, a twenty-six year old deaf carpenter, is fascinated by North American and Western European culture. Each evening he spends hours on Skype signing with friends that he has met through an online deaf forum. Whenever I visit, he also has numerous questions about deaf culture and pop culture in the United States. For the Marazig, the Douz Festival is a public declaration of a taste for local, national, and international cultures. As Regev states, “at the festivals they celebrate their omnivorous, cosmopolitan taste, thereby

claiming and assessing their sense of equal participation and membership of what is generally perceived as the innovative stylistic frontier of world culture” (ibid.:109).

Both the local heritage and international nature of the festival are important to my informant Abdelati. Every time I visit, he asks me to investigate the American scholars and photographers who have researched Douz, the Marazig, local heritage, and the festival. He is interested in what is intriguing to outsiders about Douz, what they say about Douz, and how it is similar or dissimilar to local discourse. Abdelati is focused on promoting Douz as a cultural site in addition to his own work as an artist and producer. Regev addresses this form of cosmopolitanism and suggests, “beyond actual consumption and production of art works and cultural goods, an interest emerges among such actors in placing local national culture at the frontiers of modernity and in demonstrating this as an accomplishment, and thus asserting their own status as worthy participants in those frontiers, on a par with actors from metropolitan centres or other peripheral countries” (ibid.:111-112).

Conclusion

Throughout this thesis, I have demonstrated how the International Festival of the Sahara is an opportunity for the citizens to negotiate, express, and perform aspects of their identity. In this chapter I have outlined how the international performances at the Douz Festival serve two functions. First, they define what *is* Marazig by highlighting what is different—what is *not* Marazig. Second, the participation of international performers in the festival allows residents to project another image of Douz, namely a Bedouin town with cosmopolitan citizens. I contend that there is no tension between the two; residents insist that this duality is part of what it means to be “of Douz.” The residents of Douz are open to, and seek out, performances of cultural practices from around the world. I argue that not only do they enjoy them for purely aesthetic reasons, but their interest in engaging with the Other is yet another component of identity in Douz. It is a facet rooted in the pro-Western social

policies and visions of Presidents Bourguiba and Ben Ali, who had images of a modern Tunisian state that was closely aligned with the West, politically and culturally. This cosmopolitanism sends a message to the rest of Tunisia, foreign tourists—and to the residents themselves—that Douz understands its role in the modern world and invites the citizens of the world to engage with it.

Chapter 8: Conclusion and Postlude

In this chapter I provide an overview of the major topics and arguments addressed in this thesis as well as a discussion of how the events of December 2010 and January 2011, the “Jasmine Revolution,” informed my fieldwork and research. I review facets of the central theme, namely, the premise that the most important function of the festival is its ability to serve as a forum for the residents of Douz to negotiate and process their identity as Marazig, or “of Douz”. As explained in Chapter 1, throughout this thesis I have discussed the “negotiation” of identity in Douz. However, people do *not*, in fact, openly debate what it means to be “of Douz” or dictate how that should be reflected in the festival. By stating that the Douz Festival is a site for the “negotiation” of identity, I suggest that festivity is a forum for the simultaneous expression, affirmation, and management of identity. Performances of music and dance at the festival frame and highlight what residents want to believe about themselves, and what they want others to believe about them.

The International Festival of the Sahara has a number of purposes: it educates residents and visitors about local traditions, preserves Marazig heritage in festivalised form, entertains audiences, and attracts tourists to Douz. But the most important function of the festival—one that is not articulated by residents, visitors, or researchers—is its role as an annual civic ritual that serves as a forum for the citizens to negotiate, reformulate, and express their identity. It is an opportunity for residents to articulate through various performances what it means to be “of Douz” from their perspectives, and present these perspectives not only to themselves but also to visitors. Through festival performances, residents re-evaluate their collective identity and conflicting ideas about what it means to be “of Douz”. By doing so, they also invoke images of the Other to demonstrate what is, and what is not, part of the Douz identity. Often, these aspects of identity—namely what is “of

Douz” and what is the Other—are not part of discourse in Douz; instead, the local discourse labels the residents as contemporary Bedouins and pious conservative Sunni Muslims.

Expanding upon Cooley’s analyses of folk festivals in the Polish Tatra Mountains, the Douz Festival is a ritual in the sense that it highlights the cultural artefacts and beliefs of the local community and also because it effects transformations. One such transformation is that the representations of weddings at festivals are no longer rites of passage. Participants are no longer solely family and friends of the nuptial couple, they also become part of the performance and audience. The rites become symbols of the Marazig people and what it means to be “of Douz.” Participants in these representations of weddings are re-articulating the most important ritual elements of their identity for themselves as well as for visitors. During the Douz Festival, the physical objects and practices that represent what it means to be “of Douz” are repackaged for festival consumption. Another transformation that takes place during the festival is that of the Marazig’s relationship to visitors and other Tunisians. To visitors at the festival, the Marazig, both on and off stage, are no longer just residents of the town of Douz; they become objects of the visitor’s gaze (Urry 1990 and MacCannell 1999) and a symbol of Douz’s Bedouin heritage. That is, to the visitor, the Marazig become the Other in their own town. For other Tunisians, Douz becomes a theatre of festivity that depicts the beliefs the Marazig have about who they are, who their ancestors were, and how being Marazig fits into contemporary Tunisia.

Cooley suggests that interpreting tourist folk festivals as rituals offers new insight into the relationship between the festivity and society in three areas. First, festivals are places where identities are assigned. Participation in the Douz Festival—whether as a member of a simulated wedding procession or as someone who dances with the *boussadia*—marks the participant as Marazig. The music or dance that is performed by residents of Douz is also identified as Marazig regardless of its origin. Second, festivals clarify the role of traditional

music within the context of all the music performed in a specific location (Cooley 2005:134). At the Douz Festival, music that is performed at weddings is featured more prominently because weddings are the most important venue for music making in Douz. Third, festivals create a frame for understanding changes in traditional societies. Cooley suggests that festivals are rituals that legitimize the transformation of traditional societies into modern ones (ibid.:134-135). At the Douz Festival, this transformation is led by the presence of international guest artists. The inclusion and appreciation of international acts in the festival indicates to visitors that the residents are cosmopolitan consumers of culture and world citizens who are aware of the world around them.

When asked how they identify themselves, residents of Douz usually offer a variety of responses, including: Marazig, Arab, Muslim, North African, African, and for some, black. During the Douz Festival, it is possible to see Marazig, Arab, Islamic, North African, and African practices on stage as the citizens of Douz use the festival to depict and perform perceived facets of their identity. At the opening ceremonies, some of the men of Douz travel through the centre of town wearing traditional white tunics and trousers; they state that this is how their Marazig ancestors would have dressed. *Boussadias* can be found dancing in the *souq*; some residents suggest that the *boussadia* is a link to cultural practices of West Africa. Local teenage dancers affirm their connection to the modern Arab world by dancing to the latest hits from MTV Arabia. While they dance, they are being drowned out by several *zokra* bands, which citizens associate with Bedouin traditions and weddings. According to Bramadat (2001), convergent elements like these serve as a dialog about identity between members of the community. A wide variety of contrasting images appear in Douz at the same time during the festival, without contestation. Residents never express displeasure with festival performances or programming. This silently suggests an acceptance of these images as legitimate and accepted aspects of being “of Douz”.

History of the Marazig and Douz

Just as the International Festival of the Sahara is a forum for negotiating identity in Douz, so are the narratives about the history of the town and the Marazig. Both the festival and the stories about Douz and the Marazig serve to promulgate the ideas that the residents of the town have about themselves. These depict the Marazig as fearless warriors and military heroes, as Bedouins with a profound connection to the desert, as descendants of holy men, and as faithful servants of *Allah*. All of the accounts include stories about the namesake of the Marazig people, Sidi Marzoug, and his “grandsons”, Omar al Mahjoub and Hamed al Ghouth. The latter are credited with establishing Douz and the nearby town of Laouina. The narratives are incomplete and at times inconsistent, and stress lineage and piety over dates and historical details. This historiographic problem is not unusual, for Dakhliya’s study of historical narratives in the town of Nefta reveals the same challenges (see Dakhliya 1993). Despite this, they are still valuable as part of a larger body of written and oral histories and anecdotal evidence about the history of Douz and the Marazig.

All of the written histories of Douz and the Marazig stress the connection to Bedouin tribes living in the region as well as the Arab tribes that migrated westward from the Arabian Peninsula with the expansion of Islam after the death of the Prophet Muhammad. Bedouin lineage, as Racy explains, is equated with the virtues of purity, honour, and authenticity throughout the Arab world (Racy 1996:405). Thus, this connection to the Bedouin legacy reinforces the local discourse about Douz. This is critical for a town for which desert treks, the festival, and its “authentic” Bedouin heritage are primary tourist attractions.

Some of these same written histories of Douz also provide a description of the French Protectorate in Douz and the French encounters with the Marazig. These accounts, given from the perspective of both French and Tunisian authors, cite the positive aspects of colonization, namely the introduction of hospitals, schools, and municipal infrastructure, as

well as the negative consequences, such as the imposition of Western bureaucracy and the disappearance of nomadism, a primary characteristic of Bedouin life.

In contrast, none of the historical accounts of Douz, the *Nefzaoua*, or southern Tunisia focus on their connection to sub-Saharan Africa or blackness, yet it is important to note that elements of these relationships are reflected in certain festival performances.

In many ways, residents' descriptions of music and dance performances at the Douz Festival as well as at weddings parallel the stories and histories of Douz and the Marazig. The written and oral accounts highlight the connections to Bedouin life, the Islamic world, and holy men (but not *marabouts*). Local discourse regarding music and dance does the same; Douz residents contend these performances reflect their Bedouin and Islamic heritage. A deeper investigation of festival and wedding performances, however, reveals relationships that link Douz and the Marazig to black sub-Saharan Africa, *marabouts*, and Sufism. Evidence of these connections is noticeably absent in local discourse. As Nettl observed, "One may say in song what one is not permitted to say in speech" (Nettl 2005:283).

The Function of the Douz Festival as Festivity

Public music making is a complex practice in Tunisia and the labels that Tunisians assign to different forms of festivity are not always clear and consistent. However, the structure and format of the *festival*¹ is effective for the goals and objectives of the Douz Festival. Festival administration and the citizens of Douz have expressed the opinion that the goals and objectives of the Douz Festival are cultural education, heritage preservation, entertainment, and increasing tourism. It may seem redundant for a festival to teach residents about local practices, especially those of weddings. However, several informants explained that many younger people are not exposed to Marazig customs if their families opt for modern ceremonies. Many older residents feel that the inclusion of Marazig practices in the

¹ This is the French term Tunisians use to describe a type of event previously discussed in Chapter 3.

festival is necessary in order to preserve them, even if these practices are removed from their original contexts. They believe that if modern weddings are gradually replacing traditional ones, at least the wedding practices are being performed once a year at the festival and thus are being preserved in some way. Other informants suggested that the entertainment value of the festival, for residents and visitors, is very important. One informant stated that because there is so little organized public entertainment other than weddings in Douz, the festival fills an important need. Like weddings, the festival is an opportunity for people to gather and reconfirm their social and familial ties.

Although the festival has modestly increased tourism in Douz since the 1980s, there are many barriers to making it a genuine tourist attraction. There is no easy way to get to Douz: it is a ten-hour bus ride from Tunis (there are no trains) and the closest airport is ninety minutes away in Tozeur, from which there is no direct way to get to Douz. The residents of Douz recently rejected a proposal to build an airport in town. Several informants stated that town elders and administrators feared that an airport would radically and negatively impact Douz's image and quality of life. These residents worried that an airport in Douz would conflict with its image as a Bedouin town. Unfortunately, the tourism infrastructure in Douz is not well established and many residents have expressed disappointment with the low number of international visitors, both during the festival and throughout the year. Thus, the Douz Festival has not been able to realize one of its major objectives, which is to increase tourism.

However, the festival is not just a tourist event. Though stylized and presented within a festival frame, it provides an opportunity for reassessing the ideas of what it means to be of Douz. The re-creation of weddings and desert scenes represent Douz's Marazig and Bedouin heritage. The performance of music and dances from Morocco and Egypt suggests the connection to Arab and North African communities. The presence of the *boussadia* invokes

the connection to sub-Saharan and black Africa. The portable shrine that is part of the opening ceremonies at the *Place H'nich* pays homage to the region's Sufi heritage, despite the objection to Sufism in Douz. The makeshift mobile phone kiosks in the *souks* and at *Place H'nich* demonstrate Douz's connection to modernity. As Bramadat suggests, these performances of divergent elements serve as the dialog about identity between members of the community (Bramadat 2001:84). The Douz Festival is a celebration of what it means to be Marazig and "of Douz". It provides an opportunity for the citizens to reframe quotidian practices, and the perceived quotidian practices of their ancestors, as unique to both the region and Tunisia.

Music Making and Weddings in Douz

Outside of the festival, music making in Douz revolves around weddings and wedding practices. Although there are some staged events during Ramadan that include music, attendance is limited and not all residents feel that these shows reflect current tastes in Douz. Most of my informants agreed that the music played at weddings, despite the style or origin, most accurately reflects both the Marazig heritage and contemporary music preferences in Douz.

It is clear that weddings have tremendous social and religious importance. They function as rituals, rites of passage, and opportunities to affirm religious beliefs and Marazig practices that are central to their identity. Wedding celebrations are also the events when the region's connections to mystical practices are overlooked. One example is the *Burda*, discussed in Chapter 4.

There are other practices that appear at weddings and the Douz Festival that depict other aspects of Marzig identity. Although the hair dance, *nakh*, has erotic connotations in other parts of the Arab world, the residents of Douz understand it as a celebration of feminine beauty and their Bedouin roots. The *nakh* is a customary part of weddings in Douz during

which femininity is celebrated in a fashion that evokes images of the wedding ceremonies conducted by their Bedouin ancestors.

Like the *nakh*, *zokra* bands and their repertoires are understood as symbols of the Bedouin heritage of the Marazig and Douz. Despite the fact that in North Africa the *zokra* and some of its repertoire is associated with Sufi brotherhoods, namely the Aïssâwa order, the residents of Douz embrace it as an emblem of their Bedouin ancestors. Since weddings are the most important occasions during which the community celebrates local heritage, they are also critical times for emphasizing that the local nuptial practices are Bedouin and Muslim. This reinforces the accounts of Douz and the Marazig that the residents tell about themselves.

Wedding Practices at the Festival

Because weddings are the most common site of music making in Douz, reenactments of wedding practices are central to the Douz Festival. Appearances by *zokra* bands, representations of *jeffa* processions, performances of the *nakh*, and participation by the *boussadia* and the snake charmer are key because they are markers of identity. The residents of Douz insist that these practices signify Bedouin and North African heritage.

I argue that performances by the *boussadia* and the snake charmer at weddings, and their popularity at the festival, indicate that the issue of identity in Douz is not as simple as residents suggest. The citizens of Douz are proud of the fact that the *zokra*, *nakh*, and *jeffa* processions are symbols of their Bedouin and Islamic heritage. However, neither the *boussadia* nor the snake charmer is related to Bedouin traditions or the practices of Sunni Islam. Instead, they indicate that there are connections between Douz and sub-Saharan Africa, *stambeli*, Sufism, and blackness that are notably absent from local discourse. I suggest that the inclusion of the *boussadia* and the snake charmer at weddings and at the festival confirms there are links between Douz and sub-Saharan Africa, *stambeli*, and

mystical practices. This is despite the fact that the stories, histories, and residents suggest that Douz is strictly rooted in a Bedouin and Sunni Islam heritage.

Zokra bands appear at almost all but the most basic weddings, and performers always wear the traditional costume befitting Bedouin musicians. For the residents of Douz, the image of the traditionally dressed *zokra* band is an emblem of Marazig identity. More specifically, it is the embodiment of Bedouin festivity and it idealizes the *notion* of what the public celebrations of the Marazig might have looked like in years before and during the colonial era. There are few primary sources that document the history of these celebrations. It is the musicians, and the artists who create impressions of ancient Marazig festivities, who fashion a contemporary image of traditional Marazig festivity. These musicians have become the historians and curators of their Bedouin heritage.

Despite the role they play in building identity, the wedding rituals found in Douz are not unique to Tunisia. *Zokra* bands, *jeffa* processions and *nakh* are found among many communities in North Africa with Bedouin heritage. The *boussadia* is found throughout Tunisia, and has connections to the country's relationship with sub-Saharan Africa. Snake charming traditions are not frequently seen in North Africa; however, they are closely associated with Sufi orders. Despite this connection, it is still a practice enjoyed by the residents of Douz

The representation of wedding practices at the Douz Festival is important because weddings are not just rites of passage for the couple and their families; they are important social events for the community. Wedding rituals also provide an opportunity for individuals to confirm and re-establish family and community connections. Weddings are essential parts of the town's social structure and community life. They are the only rites of passage in which the larger community actively participates; they highlight and reinforce the community's social and spiritual networks.

The *zokra* bands, *jeffa* processions, *boussadias*, snake charmers, and *nakh* are drawn from tradition and are featured during the festival in order to depict the multifaceted components of Marazig heritage. However, some facets are ignored, namely the sub-Saharan and Sufi ones, in order to maintain the Bedouin and Sunni Islam image of the town and its citizens. Nonetheless, the residents of Douz and visitors alike appreciate these performances; residents consider these performances to be quintessential parts of the festival.

The Role of the Other on Stage at the Douz Festival

Performances by international artists at the Douz Festival are important and serve two functions. First, they help demonstrate what *is* Marazig by highlighting what is different—what is *not* Marazig. Second, the participation and integration of international performers into the festival allows residents to portray another side of Douz, namely a Bedouin town with cosmopolitan residents. The residents of Douz regularly encounter people and practices from other cultures through tourism and the Internet. This cosmopolitanism is an important aspect of identity in Douz, and Tunisia in general. The international component of the festival articulates to the rest of Tunisia, tourists—and to some degree to the residents of Douz itself—that the town sees and understands its role in the modern world and invites the citizens of the world to engage with it.

A primary focus of this thesis has been to illustrate how the International Festival of the Sahara is an opportunity for the citizens to negotiate, express, and perform aspects of their identity. Although the local connections to Sufism, Maraboutism, and sub-Saharan Africa are often set aside in order to depict Douz as a Bedouin town and its residents as observant Sunni Muslims, the sense that the residents of Douz are cosmopolitan is highlighted in order to emphasize their continued engagement with the West.

Contribution to the Discipline & Opportunities for Future Research

This thesis makes a number of important contributions to the study of festivity and music making in Tunisia as well as to the broader understanding of the nature of festivals. It describes how a community uses music within a frame of festivity to represent their ideas about themselves as well as what it means to be the “Other.” It is one of the few written accounts of contemporary music making and festivity in Douz; it is also a valuable addition to the limited literature on festivals in the Arab world. Most importantly it describes music making and the Douz Festival based on direct observation and musicians’ accounts. My research—and my approach employing direct observation, interviews, and participant-observation—reveals a unique perspective on the relationship between music and festivity and contributes to the broader investigation on the function of festivity. I demonstrate that local knowledge and oral testimony can be immensely valuable to research on festivals, especially when considered in conjunction with direct observation and the relevant literature. This thesis is also a valuable addition to the limited literature on festivals in the Arab world. Lastly, my discussion of cosmopolitanism in Douz establishes a new way of understanding an “openness to world cultures” that is based on political position rather than economic aspirations.

I suggest that the research presented in this thesis could be continued in two areas. The first would be a detailed investigation of the *zokra* repertoires from Douz and the other towns in southern Tunisia. Songs in these repertoires have strong connections to specific places and musicians. My informants have suggested that melodies are often equated with certain towns and performers but are often played elsewhere by others. This research would reveal interesting relationships between music, geography, and paths of transmission. Second, a detailed study of the Douz Festival since the 2011 revolution would be valuable for understanding how the residents represent themselves in light of the nation’s shifting political

landscape. This would present a fascinating opportunity to study the intersection of politics and music in Tunisia.

Postlude: The International Festival of the Sahara and the Arab Spring

On 17 December 2010, twenty-six year old Mohamed Bouazizi, a vegetable vendor in the town of Sidi Bouzid, set himself on fire in protest of his treatment by officials from the local municipality. Bouazizi's struggle to make a living, and his conflicts with the municipal authorities over his vendor permit, struck a chord with citizens and led to protests in Sidi Bouzid, and ultimately throughout the country. Bouazizi died of his injuries on 4 January 2011. Public outrage continued and the protests and riots expanded. Ultimately, President Ben Ali fled the country on 14 January 2011, ending his twenty-three year tenure as president of Tunisia.

I flew into Tunis for a fieldwork visit on 19 December 2010, just two days after Bouazizi's self-immolation, and left on 12 January 2011, on one of the last flights out of Tunis before the start of the revolution. During this trip, I spent time in Douz and Tunis. The tumultuous state of affairs did not affect the Douz Festival; however, it was the subject of most conversations. Every evening was spent in front of the television in informants' homes, watching coverage of the nationwide protests and riots, and listening to commentary by politicians and news analysts. All of my informants felt that this was going to change Tunisia's political landscape but no one could have predicted the path or the magnitude of the change they were about to witness. Because of intermittent political instability since then, the 2010 festival was the last one I have been able to attend; however, I have returned to Douz five times since the revolution. During my visits, I interviewed residents of Douz about the changes they have experienced in the festival since the revolution.

Since the revolution, the issue that dominates discourse and the media is the role of religion in post-revolution Tunisian society. The key players are the Salafists, the members of

the very conservative branch of Islam who want to see *sharia* (the moral and religious law of Islam) as the basis for the new political and legal system; secularists who want political and legal systems based on Western European models; and the religious moderates who desire a hybrid system. Shortly after the revolution the conservative Islamic *Ennadha* party rose to power in parliament and throughout government. Their domination of political processes made it impossible to establish common ground between the Islamists and the secularists and slowed down the process of drafting a new constitution. The stalemate ended when *Ennadha* consented to relinquish power once a new constitution was passed (“Tunisia Signs New Constitution into Law”). On 26 January 2014, after two years of work, a new constitution was passed (“New Tunisian Constitution Adopted”). The new constitution acknowledges Islam as the official state religion but additionally guarantees the freedom of belief to all citizens (Amara 2014).

Some of my informants suggested that political perspectives inform listeners’ musical preferences. Several informants in Tunis explained that Western folk-inspired popular music (modelled after Woody Guthrie and Bob Dylan) has become the favoured genre among the progressive secularists in the North, and traditional folkloric music is used in the South as a symbol of resistance to both Salafism and the progressive trends of the North. The consumption of Western folk-inspired popular music in Tunis also appeared to be a marker of cultural sophistication amongst Tunisians in their twenties and thirties. My informants in Douz unanimously agreed that the Douz Festival, and music in the South in general, is detached from the religious-political rhetoric of the North and stands steadfastly as a representation of regional pride. This did not surprise me because—as I have described throughout this thesis—the residents of Douz understand their music as a symbol of their Bedouin roots and not as a marker of political position.

The questions of identity that had been below the surface before the revolution are now overtly manifesting themselves. One result of the revolution was the lifting of censorship and repression that had tacitly been in place since the Bourguiba era. The representation of identity is now freely occurring in many forms of discourse, including the media, music, visual arts, and daily conversation. Tunisians have suggested that, since 2011, music has been accepted as a meaningful way to articulate ethnic, regional, and religious differences.

The 2011 Douz Festival

In January and June 2012, I returned to Douz for several weeks in order to interview residents about the 2011 festival. My primary subject was Anis, the festival's former Secretary General. He was unable to attend the 2011 festival; he did not give a reason but suggested that local politics played a role in his decision. Anis did say that he understood that the number of non-Tunisian visitors to the festival was very low; tourists were scared away by Tunisia's political instability. However, he added, the number of Tunisian attendees was very high because of a strong domestic publicity campaign. The new president, Moncef Marzouki, attended the festival and according to Anis, this was a significant symbolic gesture for two reasons. First, Marzouki's father was born in Douz and thus is considered to be Marazig by residents. Second, a Tunisian president has not attended a Douz Festival since Bourguiba came in 1967 and inaugurated the modern version of the festival. Without much elaboration, Anis also commented that he heard that the 2011 festival was not well organized and had some logistical problems.

With a similar lack of explanation, Abdelati, a former festival artistic director, claimed that he was not invited to participate in the administration of the 2011 festival. Historically, Abdelati has been one of the driving artistic forces behind the festival. He stated that the festival committee had organized the 2011 festival solely by scheduling various performances and events and without employing an artistic director to plan a festival with a

theme. Most years, he has been the artistic director. He did not seem angry or resentful that he was not asked to help, but he was frank in saying that the festival suffered without an artistic director. In the past, many of my informants had mentioned that festival administration appointments are political ones. It is likely that Abdelati's exclusion is a marker of his political standing amongst members of the festival committee.

Abdelati said that he did attend many events and described the festival on the whole as lacking organization and a unifying theme. He stated, "there were no ideas, no themes were developed, and the festival lacked artistic vision. Just because you organize musicians does not mean you have a festival. The festival was run by amateurs this year." He attributed the organizational issues to the festival committee and the police. Due to the police's use of excessive force during the revolution, many Tunisians have expressed their distrust of officers. Festival organizers, being aware of this, hired very few police officers to control logistics and audiences, and therefore the festival was chaotic and the crowds were unmanageable.

Like Anis, Abdelati claimed that there were many Tunisian attendees, but few Europeans or North Americans. Abdelati offered a two-part explanation for this. First, the festival promoters did not successfully market the festival's image outside of Tunisia. Second, Tunisians searched for entertainment in the south since there were few events going on in the north at that time of year. Other informants in Tunis did not agree with Abdelati's second argument, citing numerous major events in the North. Abdelati's assessment might have been a result of his frustration with the festival's organizing committee, and not rooted in factual evidence.

Overall, it was Abdelati's opinion that neither the revolution nor the social and political changes in the country had affected the essence of the festival. He stated that the audience might change (there might be fewer Europeans and Americans attending if they feel

the country is unstable) and the festival might be more chaotic (depending on the perception of police presence in Tunisia). Abdelati added that the focus of the festival, namely, the traditions of Douz, the Marazig people, and the South, will not change.

My informant Belgecem confirmed that the 2011 festival was poorly organized and even chaotic at times. He, too, attributed it to the fact that very few police were hired to manage the event. Belgecem explained that during the revolution, the police used unnecessary force and were perceived as being corrupt and ineffective. He adamantly stated that all police take bribes (even his beloved nephew, Wali) and all Tunisians know this. Therefore, the police were not sent to manage events and control crowds because they are not respected and would not be effective.

Changes in the festival since the revolution can be observed in other ways. For example, each year that I have attended the festival I have been able to buy a “festival highlights” DVD immediately after the closing ceremony. The owner of a media store in the centre of Douz remembers me every year and has a copy of the disc ready for me on the day the festival ends. Interestingly, and again without explanation, there was no DVD of the 2011 festival, from this vendor or any other. The absence of a festival DVD is a reflection of the changing audience. International visitors are the only consumers of festival DVDs since Tunisian audience members believe that these DVDs are too expensive. The DVDs are understood as souvenirs for tourists; Tunisians prefer to watch festival highlights filmed by amateurs on YouTube.

Although neither Anis nor Belgecem wanted to speculate about the 2012 festival, Abdelati was eager to share his “vision”. He stated that although he had not been invited to participate yet (at the time of my interview), he would be happy to. Regardless of his involvement he hoped that the 2012 festival would be exceptional in order to celebrate Tunisia’s new government, and that the festival committee would use mass media effectively

to promote it. Abdelati hoped that the festival's events would depict the bravery of the Bedouin, and help the children of Douz understand the rest of the world. Neither Anis nor Abdelati had been actively involved in festival administration since 2011.

Several musicians in Douz offered their insights on the connection between the political upheaval in the Tunisia and music making in Douz. Skander is a 25 year-old keyboard player and an active musician in southern Tunisia who plays in a wedding band with his brother who is a percussionist. Skander stated with confidence that the revolution has not affected the music he plays, the weddings for which he plays, or the musicians with whom he plays. He said that families have strict expectations for wedding music, and deviations from the norm are not appreciated. According to Skander, there is a long-standing heritage of traditional music in the South, a heritage that is based on Bedouin and local traditions. He added that neither the repertoire nor people's tastes are easily influenced by current events and trends.

During my June 2012 visit to Douz, I was able for the first time to interview the local singer-songwriter legend Belgacem Bouguenna. Although Bouguenna is respected throughout Tunisia, he is especially revered in Douz. He was born and raised there, and lives in the nearby suburb of El Golaa. His principal job is as a primary school French teacher in Douz. In addition to this, he concertizes and performs at *festivals* and weddings, despite the fact that he admitted he does not perform at weddings. The Douz audience defines his music as folk music; his vocals are accompanied simply with *oud* and drums. Bouguenna, like Skander, stated that the revolution has not affected his music nor the traditional music of the South. He said that his music is based on traditional poetic forms that describe the natural world, man's relationship to it, and interpersonal relationships. Bouguenna added that, although he is aware of the social and political changes unfolding in Tunisia, he does not feel they have influenced his music, lyrics, performances, or audiences. Both Skander and

Bouguenna's comments reinforced the idea that music in Douz is seen primarily as a representation of Bedouin-ness and not a commentary on current events.

The 2012 Festival and Other Festivity in Douz

During my Spring 2013 trip to Tunisia, Douz was one of the first destinations on my itinerary, and the first person I visited was my informant, Moez. He is a 38 year-old employee of *Afrique Assistance*, the company that provides roadside assistance to stranded drivers and their vehicles. Moez is an accomplished drummer, and acquired much of his musical knowledge while serving as a custodian for the local community music school. Although he is very knowledgeable about Marazig, *maraboutic*, and Sufi traditions, Moez prefers to keep his discussion of the latter two short and discreet. He has never disclosed the source of his information on maraboutism and Sufism, and like all other residents of Douz, he is self-identified as a Sunni Muslim.

Moez was eager to tell me about a *festival* he organized in March. Normally, each spring there is a *zarda*, or festive pilgrimage to the *zawa* (shrines and tombs) of Hamed el Ghouth and Omar al Mahjoub. These two descendants of Sidi Marzoug, the progenitor of the Marazig people, are revered by the residents for their piety and their work establishing the towns of Douz and Laouina. Moez also reveres them for these reasons, but does not venerate them as saints (as other *marabouts* are treated throughout Tunisia). On 23 January 2013, the tomb of Ghouth was burned by Salafists who disapprove of the veneration of holy men such as Ghouth and Mahjoub. Local Salafists also blocked planning of the annual *zarda*, stating that the veneration of holy men is *haram*. Moez was upset by this, and felt that the tradition should continue, so he singlehandedly organized a *festival* of traditional and folkloric music in place of the *zarda*.

Moez secured an empty plot of land in his neighbourhood for the event. He invited local musicians to play, and even consulted the police about the event. Moez said that the

festival was a great success, and the Salafists did not interfere with it. He added that it is possible that they did not know it was occurring. In my opinion, the case of Moez's *festival* exemplifies the religious conflict in contemporary Tunisia. Although Moez identifies as a Sunni, he understands that other Tunisians have other beliefs. There are individuals, like Moez, who think that there should be room for all traditions and religious beliefs in Tunisia and there are others, such as many of the Salafists, who believe that modern Tunisia should adhere to a strict interpretation of Sunni Islam and Sharia law. Moez's *festival* reinforces my theory that *festivals* in Douz, and throughout Tunisia, are powerful forums for the articulation of identity. In this case, there were overt verbal negotiations concerning identities and their representations. Moez was able to successfully share his vision of religious tolerance through this *festival*. By organizing it without having to confront government officials or other parties engaged in religious and political discourse, Moez was able to use festivity to make a statement about local traditions and history that were important to him. This is the only case like this I have experienced during my fieldwork visits.

While in Douz, I asked several informants about the 2012 International Festival of the Sahara. I had an opportunity to talk to Abdelati again. Every time I have asked Abdelati about the festival since the revolution, he has stated that he has been disappointed with it. According to Abdelati, there are so many ways the festival could represent the cultural changes in Tunisia since the revolution, but it does not. He continued by saying that in 2012, "the festival had no heart." In contrast, Ahmed, a 55 year-old school administrator, stated that he prefers the more recent Douz Festivals. He stated that "since the revolution, the festival is more Marazig—it is better." Unfortunately, he was not willing to elaborate on this.

The rise of the expression of the "local" and formerly suppressed populations of Tunisia was articulated by others as well. During my 2013 visit, I interviewed several musicians to discuss festivity in general since the revolution, and the state of music making in

contemporary Tunisia. One interview was with Anouar, a 44 year-old singer-songwriter and calligrapher, based in Tunis. According to Anouar, the internal sense of identity and difference in Tunisia has expanded since the revolution. He explained that President Bouguiba's policies from the 1950s to the 1980s created a Western, modern, and unified Tunisia that suppressed individuality. Bourguiba outlawed religious extremism, suppressed the expression of Bedouin cultures, tried to abolish Ramadan, and promoted a "we are all Tunisian" public image. President Ben Ali's regime from 1987 to 2011 continued these policies, and furthermore restricted free speech and the press. After the revolution, as Anouar stated, many Tunisians—whose ethnic and religious identities had been suppressed—were eager to express both their individuality and their affiliation with religious and ethnic groups. Thus, the number of Tunisians identifying with Salafist, Wahabbist, and *Sahrawi* (Bedouin) groups expanded quickly. Anouar stated that Tunisians should be able to articulate who they are and practice whatever traditions their heritage embraces, as long as this does not adversely affect others. He suggested that there are many Tunisians who feel the same way, and the challenge of the next phase of Tunisia's history will include the reconciliation of the various factions within the country.

Conclusion

During fieldwork trips since the revolution, it has been clear that the conflict between the secularism and religious conservatism is at the heart of Tunisia's internal struggles. This conflict affects most aspects of public life, including political discourse, fashion (especially the socially charged issues of head coverings for women, and beards for men), and music. Although there is no consensus among my informants on the effect of the revolution on festivity, they agree that music is used to express political ideology. For Anouar, his audiences and the musical events he frequents, Western-style folk music is *the music* of progressively minded Tunisians. For them, it represents an authentic voice of the people that

wields the sort of power that they believe figures like Bob Dylan have in the United States.

For Moez and Skander, traditional folkloric music, including all the music heard at the International Festival of the Sahara, is *the music* of Douz. It encapsulates what it means to be “of the South” and represents a moderate and pragmatic approach to life rooted in Bedouin sensibilities.

This confirms what I have demonstrated throughout this thesis. Festivity in Douz, and throughout Tunisia, is understood as a culturally appropriate venue for the articulation of identity, including but not limited to political, ethnic, and religious affiliation. *Festivals* are spaces where musicians can articulate who they are by performing and audience members can express who they are by engaging with the music and participating in the discourse about it.

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وزارة الثقافة

الجمهورية التونسية

المندوبية الجهوية للثقافة، بنغازي

المهرجان الدولي للصحراء بدوز

Festival International du Sahara de
The Sahara International Festival of

DOUZ

من 26 إلى 29 ديسمبر 2013 Du 26 au 29 Décembre 2013

46

الدورة
Session

البرنامج Programme

المستثمر الرسمي



اتصالات تونس
GROUPE TUNISIE TELECOM

المستقبل يبدأ بك | مستثمر حكومي رسمي

مساهمة
تونس
TUNISIA



1
الوطنية
TUNISIA

2
الوطنية
TUNISIA

Avec le
Patronage de

المهرجان الدولي للصحراء بـدو ز

Festival International du Sahara de | DOUZ
The Sahara International Festival of |

من 26 إلى 29 ديسمبر 2013 Du 26 au 29 Décembre 2013

الدورة
Session

Programme 46

البرنامج

ایک نیا پاکستان بناؤں گا



برنامج الدورة 46 للمهرجان الدولي للصحراء بدوز

الأربعاء 25/12/2013

الساعة 20:30 :

بدار الثقافة امحمد المرزوقي بدوز :

- حفل فني ساهر .

اليوم الأول : الخميس 26/12/2013

الساعة 9:00 :

بساحة الشهداء

- انطلاق فعاليات المهرجان والعرض الافتتاحي بتنشيط الفرق الشعبية ولوحات مميزة للمهرجان.

الساعة 10:00 :

بدار الثقافة امحمد المرزوقي بدوز:

- انطلاق العكاظية الشعرية : موضوع المسابقة " الشعر و الليل صلبة " بمشاركة نخبة مختارة من الشعراء الذين تقدموا للمسابقة من مختلف جهات الجمهورية .

- افتتاح المعارض الثقافية : معارض الرسم والأعشاب الطبية والصور الفوتوغرافية و معرض خاص بمنتجات مركز التكوين المهني بدوز.

بدار الشباب دوز:

- حملة تحسيسية في السلامة المرورية من تأثيث " نادي التنشيط المروري بدار الشباب دوز .

- افتتاح معرض الفنون التشكيلية من تأثيث " نادي الفنون والإبداع بدار الشباب دوز .

- افتتاح معرض " النساء الحرفيات " من تأثيث " نادي الأنشطة الترفيهية بدار الشباب دوز .

ببناي الأطفال الواحة بدوز:

- ألعاب بدون حدود " كرماس " من تأثيث " نادي الأطفال الواحة بدوز .

ببساحة السوق:

- ورشات في الإعلامية والانترنات من تأثيث " نادي الإعلامية المتنقل بقبلي .

- مسابقات مختلفة من تأثيث " جمعية منشطون بلا حدود بقبلي .

- خيمة رحلة الوطن الواحد تأثيث " جمعية فجر الصحراء ومركز اليوم العالمي " .

- مسابقات / ألعاب بلا حدود من تأثيث " وحدة تنشيط الأحياء بقبلي بالمكتبة العمومية بدوز الجنوبية:

- معرض دائم منشورات أبناء الجهة .

برواق 14 جانفي:

- معرض النضال الوطني (صور و وثائق) تأثيث " نادي 29 ماي 1944 " .

بالقرب من إدارة المهرجان:

- خيمة صحية (قيس الدم والسكري) من تأثيث " الهلال الأحمر التونسي فرع دوز .

- خيمة الإسعافات الأولية " للهلال الأحمر فرع دوز " .

- خيمة معرض وثائقي لأنشطة هيئة الهلال الاحمر فرع دوز منذ تأسيسها .

الساعة 20:30 :

بمدار الثقافة امحمد المروقي بدوز :

- حفل فني ساهر " ليلة البرج " ثلثة من شعراء دوز .

اليوم الثاني : الجمعة 2013/12/27

الساعة 9:00 :

بمساحة السوق :

- عروض الفرق الفلكلورية من المداخل الرئيسية للمدينة باتجاه السوق .

الساعة 10:00 :

بمساحة الشهداء :

- انطلاق سباق الدراجات الهوائية :

أكابر وأواسط من تأثيث " جمعية فجر

الصحراء للدراجات العادية بدوز

بالتعاون مع الجامعة التونسية للدراجات الهوائية " .

بمدار الثقافة امحمد المروقي بدوز :

- مواصلة العكاظية الشعرية (مسابقة الشعر والليل صحرية)
والمعارض الثقافية و الفوتوغرافية و معرض خاص بمنتجات مركز
التكوين المهني بدوز

بمساحة السوق :

- تظاهرة تنشيطية تحت عنوان " لننس الاختلاف ونشارك معا فرحة
المهرجان من تأثيث

" الجمعية العامة للقاصرين عن الحركة العضوية فرع دوز بالشراكة

مع دار الشباب دوز و نادي الأطفال الواحة بدوز .

بشوارع المدينة

- تنشيط بالفرق الفلكلورية .

- حملة تحسيسية عن " أهمية العمل التطوعي " على متن دراجات

هوائية من تأثيث " الهلال الاحمر التونسي فرع دوز بالتعاون مع

الهيئة الجهوية بمدنين " .

- عرض تنشيطي "لاجورات قصر هلال " .

- عرض تنشيطي :

دمى عملاقة - ألعاب مختلفة

من تأثيث

جمعية فوشانة للدمى العملاقة " .

بالمدرسة الكبرى :

- مسابقات للأطفال من تأثيث " المنظمة التونسية للطفل (المكتب

الجهوي بقبلي) .

الساعة 14:00 :

بمساحة حنيش :

- العرض الفرجوي : (لوحات من الحياة الصحراوية المرحول /

الطافلة / العرس التقليدي

سباق الخيل / الصيد بالسوقي

صراك الفحول / النخان / الميازي

المدائري (...)

الساعة 17:00 :

بالمكتبة العمومية بدوز الجنوبية :

- ندوة تحت عنوان : " حماية الواحات " بالشراكة مع " جمعية البديل

الثقافي بدوز " .



الساعة 17:00 :

بالمكتبة العمومية بدوز الجنوبية:

- ندوة تحت عنوان: " ثروات الجهة وكيفية استغلالها " بالشراكة مع جمعية البديل الثقافي بدوز .

الساعة 20:30 :

بدار الثقافة امحمد المرزوقي بدوز:

- حفل فني ساهر.

بالمنتزه البلدي بدوز:

- سهرة السامور (الشعر والموقف تأثيث جملة من الشعراء).

اليوم الثالث : السبت 2013/12/28

الساعة 9:00 :

بساحة السوق:

- عروض الفرق الفلكلورية من المداخل الرئيسية للمدينة باتجاه السوق .

بساحة حنيش:

- سباق القدرة والتحمل للخيول بالتعاون مع " الجامعة التونسية لرياضات الفروسية .

- مرابطون المهاري بالتعاون مع " جمعية ابل بدوز " (الانطلاق على

الساعة 13:00)

الساعة 10:00 :

بدار الشباب دوز:

- نهائيات دورة الشطرنج من تأثيث " نادي الألعاب الفكرية بدار الشباب دوز .

- مواصلة نشاط ورشات في الإعلامية و الانترنت من تأثيث " نادي الإعلامية المتنقل بقبلي .

- مواصلة المسابقات من تأثيث " جمعية منشطون بلا حدود بقبلي .

- مسابقة في اللباس التقليدي للأطفال .

- مسابقة أجمل مهري .

بدار المسرح بدوز:

- عرض مسرحي للأطفال

بدار الشباب دوز:

- ندوة حول " التسامح " من تأثيث " الرابطة التونسية للتسامح .

- دورة في الشطرنج من تأثيث " نادي الألعاب الفكرية بدار الشباب دوز .

- مواصلة معرض " النساء الحرفيات " من تأثيث " نادي الأنشطة الترفيهية بدار الشباب دوز .

- مواصلة معرض الفنون التشكيلية من تأثيث " نادي الفنون والإبداع بدار الشباب دوز .

بالمدرسة الكبرى:

- مواصلة مسابقات للأطفال من تأثيث " المنظمة التونسية للطفل (المكتب الجهوي بقبلي) .

بشوارع المدينة:

- مواصلة العروض التثقيفية : دمي عملاقة - ألعاب مختلفة من تأثيث " جمعية فوشانة للدمى العملاقة .

الساعة 14:00 :

بساحة حنيش:

- عرض فرجوي: (لوحات من الحياة الصحراوية : المرحول / القافلة / الدولاب / الصيد بالسلوقي / سباق المهاري / عراك الفحول) .

بالمكتبة العمومية بدوز الجنوبية:

- ملقى المدونين الشبان من تأنيث " نادي صحافة المواطنة بدار الشباب دوز بالشراكة مع نادي صحافة المواطنة بدار الشباب قبلي .

بالمدرسة الكبرى :

- مواصلة المسابقات للأطفال
من تأنيث " المنظمة التونسية للطفل (المكتب الجهوي بقبلي) "

الساعة 14:00 :

بساحة حنيش:

- تنشيط: عروض فرق فلكلورية من تونس
و الدول الشقيقة والصديقة.
- سباق المراتلون
الدولي للمهاري (الوصول).



- استعراض للدراجات الهوائية من تأنيث " جمعية فجر الصحراء للدراجات العادية بدوز بالتعاون مع الجامعة التونسية للهوائية ."
- سباق الدراجات الهوائية : أصاغر وصغريات من تأنيث " جمعية فجر الصحراء للدراجات العادية بدوز بالتعاون مع الجامعة التونسية للهوائية ."

الساعة 17:00 :

بالمكتبة العمومية بدوز الجنوبية:

- ندوة تحت عنوان: " الشعر الشعبي والمقاومة " بالشراكة مع " جمعية البديل الثقافي بدوز ."

الساعة 20:30 :

بدار الثقافة امحمد المرزوقي بدوز:
- عرض فني بمشاركة الفرق الضيفة.

- مواصلة معرض " النساء الحرفيات " من تأنيث " نادي الأنشطة الترفيهية بدار الشباب دوز ."

- مواصلة معرض الفنون التشكيلية من تأنيث " نادي الفنون والإبداع بدار الشباب دوز . - ندوة تحت عنوان : الرياضة والسياحة والثقافة من تأنيث " المندوبية الجهوية للشباب والرياضة بقبلي بالتعاون مع الجامعة التونسية للرياضة للجميع ."

بدار الثقافة امحمد المرزوقي بدوز:

- مواصلة العكاظية الشعرية (مسابقة الشعر والليل صعبة) والمعارض الثقافية .

بدار المسرح بدوز:

- عرض مسرحي للأطفال .

بنادي الأطفال الواحة بدوز:

- يوم مفتوح في الرسم للجميع : جداريات " من تأنيث " نادي الأطفال الواحة بدوز .

بشوارع المدينة:

- مواصلة العروض التشيطية : دمي عملاقة - ألعاب مختلفة من تأنيث جمعية فوشانة للدمى العملاقة.

بساحة السوق:

- ألعاب شعبية من تأنيث " الجمعية التونسية للألعاب والرياضات التراثية بالتعاون

مع الجامعة التونسية للرياضة للجميع ."

- مواصلة نشاط ورشات الإعلامية و الانترنت من تأنيث " نادي الإعلامية المتنقل بقبلي ."

- مواصلة المسابقات من تأنيث " جمعية منشطون بلا حدود بقبلي ."

- مسابقة أجمل فارس بساحة السوق .

الفكرية من تأثيث " نادي الأطفال الواحة بدوز . "

بشوارع المدينة:

- مواصلة العروض التنشيطية : دمي عملاقة - ألعاب مختلفة من تأثيث " جمعية فوشانة للدمى العملاقة " .

بساحة السوق:

- مواصلة الألعاب الشعبية من تأثيث " الجمعية التونسية للألعاب و الرياضات التراثية بالتعاون مع الجامعة التونسية للرياضة للجميع " .
- مواصلة المسابقات من تأثيث " جمعية منشطون بلا حدود بقبلي " .
- مواصلة نشاط ورشات الإعلامية والانترنات من تأثيث " نادي الإعلامية المتنقل بقبلي ونادي الإعلامية المتنقل بالكاف " .
- مسابقة أحسن كلب صيد (سلوقي) .

بالمدرسة الكبرى:

- مواصلة المسابقات للأطفال من تأثيث " المنظمة التونسية للطفل (المكتب الجهوي بقبلي) " .

بمتحف الصحراء:

- معرض للأكلات الشعبية التقليدية .

الساعة : 14:00 :

بساحة حنيش:

- عرض فرجوي: (لوحات من الحياة الصحراوية: المرحول / القافلة / العرس التقليدي / سباق الخيل / الصيد بالسلوقي / عراك الضحون / التخان / الميازي / المداوري ...)
- اختتام العروض وحفظ العلم .

بدار المسرح بدوز:

- سهرة الشعر الفصيح بالتعاون مع فرقة بلدية دوز للتمثيل .

اليوم الرابع : الأحد 2013/12/29

الساعة 9:00 :

بساحة السوق:

- عروض الفرق الفلكلورية من المداخل الرئيسية للمدينة باتجاه السوق .

بساحة حنيش:

- مرطون الصحراء (أصاغر وأكابر) من تأثيث "جمعية صحراء دوز للعدو الريفي بالتعاون مع الجامعة التونسية للرياضة للجميع"
الساعة 10:00 :

بدار الثقافة امحمد المرزوقي بدوز:

- مواصلة العكاظية الشعرية (لسة وفاء: تكريم الشاعرين المرحومين محمد الطويل و "علي بيلة" والإعلان عن نتائج المسابقة)
- المعارض الثقافية .

بدار الشباب دوز:

- حملة تحسيسية في السلامة المرورية من تأثيث " نادي التنقيف المروري بدار الشباب دوز " .
- مواصلة معرض "النساء الحرفيات" من تأثيث " نادي الأنشطة الترفيهية بدار الشباب دوز " .
- مواصلة معرض الفنون التشكيلية من تأثيث " نادي الفنون والإبداع بدار الشباب دوز " .

بنادي الأطفال الواحة بدوز:

- مباريات ثقافية بين المدارس الابتدائية بالجهة و مسابقات في الألعاب

الساعة 17:00 :

بالمكتبة العمومية بدوز الجنوبية:

- ندوة تحت عنوان: "استكشاف آثار الجهة و حمايتها:
- الإشكاليات والحلول "بالشراكة مع "جمعية البديل الثقافي بدوز."

الساعة 20:30 :

بدار الثقافة امحمد المرزوقي بدوز:

- حفل فني ساهر .
- اختتام المهرجان .

x ملاحظة: تغطية سمعية بصرية من تأنيث "نوادي صحافة المواطنة بدوز الشباب بقبلي" .

At the Elwaha children's club in Douz

- Cultural competitions among primary schools of the region, and intellectual games contest, organized by the ELWAHA children's club in Douz.

In the streets of the town

- Continuation of the animation shows: Giant Dolls various games, organized by the Giant Dolls association for FUSHANA.

At the souk square

- Continuation of the popular games, organized by the patrimonial sports and games Tunisian association, in collaboration with the sports for all Tunisian leagues.
- Continuation of the competitions, organized by the without borders animators associations of Kebili.
- Continuation of the workshops in computer science and the internet, organized by the mobile computer science club of Kebili, and the mobile computer science club of ELKEF.

- Contest: to choose the Best hunting Dog (SLUGUI)

At the primary school (ALKUBRA)

- Continuation of the competitions for children, organized by the Tunisian child organization (the regional board of Kebili)

At the Sahara Museum:

- Popular traditional Dishes exhibition.

14:00 p.m:

At H'NISH square

- Show (daily scenes from the Saharan life): ALMARHUL, the caravan, the traditional wedding, horse race, hunting with hunting dogs, camels fighting, ENNAKHAN, ELMIAZI, ELMEDAWRI.

- Closure of the festival and the lowering of the flag.

17:00 p.m:

At the public library Douz south

- Conference, around the topic: "discovery of the ruins of the region and the ways to protect them": problems and solutions, in partnership with the cultural alternative association of Douz.

20:30 p.m:

At M'HEMED ELMARZOUGUI cultural center in Douz

- musical performance.
- Closure of the festival
- A touch of fidelity in Honor of the late poet MOHAMMED ETTAWIL et ALI BILA

Note: Audio visual coverage, organized by the citizenship clubs of the youth centers of Kebili

center in Kebili.

At the primary school (ELKUBRA)

- Continuation of the competitions for children, organized by the Tunisian child organization (the regional Board of Kebili)

14:00 p.m:

At H'nish SQUARE

- SHOW : Folk bands parades, from Tunisia and the brotherly and friendly countries.
- The international Meharis marathon, (the arrival).
- Bicycles parades, organized by the Sahara down association for bicycles in Douz, in collaboration with the Tunisian leagues for bicycles.
- Bicycles race: junior (boys and girls) organized by the association for bicycles in Douz.

17:00 p.m:

At the public library Douz, South

- Conference, around the topic: Dialect at Poetry and the struggle for independence. In partnership with the cultural alternative association of Douz.

20:30 p.m:

At M'HEMED ELMARZOUGUI cultural center in Douz

- Musical performance, with the participation of the guest Folk Bands.

At the theatre house in Douz

- Library poetry evening, in collaboration with the municipality of Douz theatre company.

Fourth day : Sunday , December 29th, 2013

9:00 a.m

At the souk square

- Folk bands parades coming from the main entrances of the town, and heading towards the souk square.

At H'NICH square

- The sahara marathon (junior and senior), organized by the Sahara Douz association for running, in collaboration with the sport for all Tunisian league.

10:00 a.m:

At M'HEMED ELMARZOUGUI cultural center in Douz

- Continuation of the poetry contest a touch of fidelity (proclamation of the results of the contest), and the cultural exhibition.

At the youth center in Douz

- An awareness campaign about road safety, organized by the road safety awareness club of the youth center in Douz.
- Continuation of the exhibition " women's craftsmanship", organized by the entertaining activities club of the youth center in Douz.
- Continuation of the plastic arts exhibition, organized by the creativity and arts club of the youth center in Douz.

Third day: Saturday, December 28th, 2013

9:00 a.m:

At the market square

- Folk bands parades coming from the main entrances of the town and heading towards the souk square.



At H'NISH square

- Departure of the horse endurance race, in collaboration with the equestrian sports Tunisian league.

13:00 p.m:

departure of the Meheris Marathon, in collaboration with the camels association of Douz.

10:00 a.m:

At the youth center in Douz

- Chess tournament finals, organized by the intellectual games club of the youth center in Douz.
- Continuation of the exhibition "women's craftsmanship", organized by the entertaining activities club of the youth center in Douz.
- Continuation of the plastic arts exhibition, organized by the creativity and arts club of the youth center in Douz.
- Conference, around the topic: "sports, tourism and culture", organized by the regional youth commission in collaboration with the sports for all Tunisian league.

At M'HEMED ELMARZOUQUI cultural center in Douz

- Continuation of the poetry contest and the cultural exhibition.

At the theatre house in Douz

- Theatrical performance for children.

At ELWAHA children's club in Douz

- Open day of painting for all: "Graffiti" organized by ELWAHA children club in Douz.

In the streets of the town

- Continuation of the animation shows: Giants Dolls various games, organized by the Giant Dolls association of FUSHANA.

At the souk square

- Popular games, organized by the patrimonial sports and games Tunisian association, in collaboration with the sports for all Tunisian leagues.
- Continuation of workshops in computer science and the internet organized by the mobile computer science club of Kebili.
- Continuation of competition organized by the without borders animators association at Kebili.
- Beauty contest: to choose the most beautiful HORSEMAN, in the souk square.

At the public library Douz south

- Young columnists seminar, organized by the citizenship press club of the youth center in Douz, in partnership with the citizenship Press club of the youth

At M'HEMED ELMARZOUGUI cultural center in Douz

- Continuation of the poetry contest and the cultural exhibitions.

At the souk square

- Cultural event, around the topic "let's forget our differences and participate together in the happiness of the festival organized by the physically handicapped, general association, branch of Douz, in collaboration with the youth center of Douz, and the oasis children club of Douz.

- Continuation of workshops in computer science and the internet, organized by the mobile computer science club of Kebili.

- Continuation of the competitions organized by the without borders animators association of Kebili.

- Traditional clothes competition for children.
- Beauty contest: to choose the most beautiful MEHARI

At the theatre house in Douz

- Theatrical performance for children.

At the youth center in Douz

- Conference, around the topic "TOLERANCE" organized by the tolerance Tunisian league.
- Chess Tournament, organized by the intellectual games club of the youth center in Douz.
- Continuation of the exhibition "women's craftsmanship", organized by the entertaining activities club of the youth center in Douz.

- Continuation of the plastic arts exhibition, organized by the creativity and art club of the youth center in Douz.

At the primary school (ALKUBRA)

- Continuation of the competitions for children, organized by the Tunisian child organization, (the regional board of Kebili).

In the streets of the town

- Continuation of animation shows : Giant Dolls_ various Games, organized by the Giant Dolls association of FOUSHANA.

14:00 p.m:

At H'NISH square

- Show (scenes from the Saharan life): ALMARHUL, the caravan, the Duleb, hunting with hunting dogs, meheris race, camels fighting.

17:00 p.m:

At the public library Douz south

- Conference, around the topic: "the regional wealth of raw materials and the ways to exploit it."

20:00 p.m

At M'HEMED ELMARZOUGUI cultural center in Douz

- Artistic show.

At the municipal park

- Bon fire evening (ESSAMUR): poetry and ALMUGAF organized by a Group of poets.

At the January 14th Gallery:

- The national military exhibition (photos and documents), organized by the May 29th, 1944 club.

Near the festival headquarters

- Sanitary tent (blood pressure and diabetes check up), organized by the Tunisian red crescent, branch of Douz.
- First aid tent, organized by the Tunisian Red crescent, Branch of Douz.
- Documentary exhibition tent dealing with the Red Crescent board, Branch of Douz, since its foundation.

In the streets of the town

- Animation by Folk bands.
- Awareness campaign about "the importance of voluntary work", on bikes, organized by the Tunisian Red Crescent, branch of Douz, in collaboration with the regional board of Medenine.
- Animation show , drum majorette of Ksar Hilal.

At the primary school: (ALKUBRA)

- Competitions for children, organized by the Tunisian child organization(the regional board of Kebili).

14:00 p.m:

At H'NISH square:

- Show (Daily scences from the Saharan life) ALMA-RHUL, the caravan, the traditional widdling, horse

race, hunting with hunting dogs, camels fighting, ENNAKHAN, ELMAIAZI, ELMEDAWRI.

17:00 p.m:

At the public library Douz South

- Conference around the topic "protection of the oasis", organized by the cultural alternative association of Douz.

20:30 p.m:

At th M'HEMED ELMARZOUGUI cultural center in Douz:

- Artistic show "the night of the Fortress (ELBORJ) performed by an elite of poets from Douz.

Second day : Friday, December 27th, 2013

9:00 a.m:

At the souk square

- Folk bands parades coming from the main entrances of the town and heading towards the souk square

10:00 a.m:

At the martyrs' square

- Departure of the bicycles' race seniors and juniors, organized by the Sahara dawn association of Douz, in collaboration with the bicycles Tunisian league.



Program of the 46th edition of the international festival of Douz

Wednesday, December 25th, 2013

20:30 p.m :

musical performance at M'HEMED ELMARZOUGUI cultural center in Douz

First day: Thursday, December 26th, 2013

9:00 a.m:

At the martyrs' square

- Start of the activities of the festival and the opening ceremony, animated by Folk Bands and impressive scenes of the festival.

10:00 a.m:

At M'HEMED ELMARZOUGUI cultural center in Douz

- Start of the poetry contest around the topic "Poetry and night in good company." With the participation of an elite of poets from the different regions of the country

- Opining of the cultural exhibitions: plastic arts, medicinal plants and photographic exhibitions.

- Products of Douz vocational training center.

At the youth center in Douz

- An awareness campaign about road safety, organized by the road safety awareness club of the youth center in Douz.

- Opining of the plastic art exhibition, organized by the creativity and arts club of the youth center in Douz.

- Opining of the exhibition, "women's craftsmanship", organized by the entertaining activities club of the youth center in Douz.

At the Souk Square:

- Workshops in computer science and the internet, organized by the mobile computer science club of kebili.

- Various competitions, organized by the without borders animators association of kebili.

- The one country journey tent, organized by "dawn of the sahara association" and the international day center.

- Competitions games without borders, organized by the districts animation unit of Kebili.

At ELWAHA children's club in Douz:

- Games without borders "Fair" organized by the ELWAHA children's club in Douz

At the sahara museum:

- Popular games, organized by the Tunisian patrimonial sports and games association in collaboration with the sports for all Tunisian league.

At the public library,Douz

- Permanent exhibition of publications by local authors.

17h00

♦ Lieu : bibliothèque de Douz Sud

- Colloque / séminaire : découverts des vestiges de la région et sa protection : problèmes et solutions

20h30

Lieu : maison de culture **MOHAMED ELMARZOUGUI**

- Galla artistique
- Clôture de festival

Remarque: Audio couverture visuelle, organisée par les clubs de la citoyenneté des centres de jeunes de Kebili

Lieu : maison de théâtre

- Soirées de poésie classique (en collaboration de troupe théâtrale municipale du Doyz

Quatrième journée : Dimanche 29/12/2013

09h00

Lieu : place de Souk

- Spectacle : troupe folklorique a travers des rues de la ville

Lieu : place HNICH

- Marathon de sahara en collaboration avec la fédération tunisienne (sport pour tous)

10h00

Lieu : maison de la culture

MOHAMED ELMARZOUGUI

- Joute poétique : réception du remerciement pour les poètes feu : MOHAMED ETTAWIL et BILA ALI et les résultats

- Exposition culturelle

Lieu : maison des jeunes de Douz

- Compagnie de sensibilisation pour la sécurité routière (encadré par le club culture routière – Douz)

- Exposition « femmes artisane » (organisé par le club loisir Douz)

- Exposition art pastique (encadré par club des arts et création- Douz)

Lieu : les rues de la ville

- Spectacle et animation : marionnettes géante, jeux divers (en collaboration avec association Fouchana de marionnettes géante)

Lieu : place de Souk

- Concours encadré par l'association animateurs sans frontière Kébili.

- Atelier d'informatique et d'internet (encadré par le club d'informatique Kébili et el Kef)

- Concours de meilleur chien de chasse (lièvre / SLOUGUI)

Lieu : école primaire ELKOUBRA Douz

- Concours pour les enfants (organisé par l'association tunisiennes de l'enfant, bureau régionale de Kébili)

Lieu : Musée de Sahara

- Exposition de plat et cuisine traditionnelle populaire
- Jeux folklorique (animé par l'association Tunisienne des jeux et sport antique en collaboration de fédération Tunisienne de sport pour tous

14 h00

Lieu : place de HNICH

- Spectacle : scène de la vie saharienne : MARHOUL, troupe folklorique, chasse aux slougui,....

- Clôture de spectacle

Lieu : place de HNICH

- Course des chevaux : en Durance et capacité
10h00

Lieu : maison des jeunes de Douz

- Final de tournoi d'échec
- Exposition « femmes artisanes »
- Exposition art plastique
- Colloque « la tolérance » organisé par l'association nationale de tolérance

Lieu: maison de la culture

MOHAMED ELMARZOUGUI

- Troisième journée de la joute poétique
- Les expositions culturelles

Lieu: Maison de théâtre Douz

- Spectacles théâtrale pour enfants

Lieu : les rues de la ville

- Spectacle et animation : marionnette géantes, divers jeux,...

Lieu : place de Souk

- Atelier d'informatique et d'internet
- Concours divers
- Concours de meilleur cavalier

Lieu : bibliothèque de Douz- Sud

- Conférence de jeunes bloggeurs (organisé par le club de presse de citoyenneté Douz- Kébil)

Lieu: Ecole primaire ELKOUBRA Douz

- Concours pour enfants animé par l'association Tunisienne des l'enfant Kébili

Lieu : Musée de Sahara

- Jeux folklorique populaire
14h00

Lieu : place da HNICH

- Animation, spectacle avec des troupes folkloriques nationales et internationales
- Marathon international de MEHARI (dromadaire des courses) : l'arrivée



- Spectacle des vélos

(présenté par le club de Laube de sahara de Douz)

- Courses des vélos : cadets et cadettes
17h00

Lieu : Bibliothèque de Douz Sud

- Colloque « la poésie folklorique et la résistance
20h30

Lieu : maison de la culture

MOHAMED ELMARZOUGUI

- Spectacle artistique avec la collaboration de troupes invitées.

- Concours du meilleur MEHARI (Dromadaire de la course)

Lieu : place de HNICH

- Rallye motocycle (organisé par l'association de développement sportive et animation des jeunes Douz et fédération Tunisienne de motocycles)

Lieu: Maison de théâtre Douz

- Spectacle théâtrale pour enfants

Lieu : maison des jeunes de Douz

- Séminaire sous titre : « sport, tourisme et culture » (animé par la direction régionale des jeunes et de sports Kébili et la fédération Tunisienne pour tous.

- Événement pour une meilleure action à la bonne réussite du festival (animé par l'association générale des handicapés moteurs AJM Douz en collaboration avec la maison des jeunes de Douz.

- Tournoi d'échec (organisé par le club des jeux Douz)
- Deuxième journée de l'exposition «femmes artisane» (animé par le club de loisir Douz)

- Deuxième journée de l'exposition de l'art plastique (animé par le club d'art et de création Douz)

Lieu : école primaire ELKOUBRA Douz

- Divers concours pour l'enfant (encadré par l'association tunisienne de l'enfant Kébil)

Les rues et les avenues de la ville

- Spectacles et animation : Marionnettes géantes, divers jeux,...

Lieu: Musée de sahara

- Jeux populaire/ folklorique.

14 h00

Lieu : place de HNICH

- Spectacle folklorique : scène de la vie Saharienne traditionnelle : MARHUL,
- caravane, chasse aux slougui (lièvre), combat des dromadaires, course de la rue.

17h00

Lieu : la bibliothèque de Douz_Sud

- Colloque « ressource de le région et manière de sin exploitation »(organisé par l'association alternatif culturelle-Douz)

20h30

Lieu : maison de la culture MOHAMED ELMARZOUGUI

- Galla artistique

Lieu : jardin municipale (route matmata) :

- Galla « ESSAMOUR » poésie et dance folklorique animé par des poète.

La troisième journée: Samedi 28/12/2013

09h00

Lieu : place de Souk

- Spectacle et animation des rues avec les troupes folklorique



Lieu : les rues et les avenues de la ville :

- Animations des rues avec des troupes Folkloriques.
- Compagnie de sensibilisation : « l'importance de travail volontaire » à vélo (animé par le croissant rouge_ Douz en collaboration de l'ordre régionales Mednine)



- Animation avec le majorette de Ksar Helal.
- Animation avec les marionnettes Géants, divers jeux (encadré par l'association de marionnettes géantes Fouchana).

Lieu : école de Douz

- Concours pour les enfants (encadrées par l'association Tunisienne de l'enfant, Kébili)

14h00

Lieu : Place HNICH

- Spectacle Folklorique : scène de la vie saharienne traditionnelle: le Marhoul, la caravanne, le mariage traditionnel, la course



des cheveux la chasse aux lièvres, le combat de dromadaires,...

17h00

Lieu : la bibliothèque de Douz_Sud

- Séminaire sous titre « la protection d'oasis

(organisé par l'association alternatif culturelle-Douz)
20h30

**Lieu : maison da la culture
MOHAMED ELMARZOUGUI**

- Gala artistique : « la nuit d'EL BORJ » (animé par des poètes de Douz)

La deuxième journée Vendredi 27/12/2013

09h00

Lieu : Place de Souk

- Spectacle de chant de musique et de dance de troupe Folklorique

10h00

Lieu : place de martyrs

- Course de vélo senior et junior (organisé par l'association cycliste «FAJR



Essahra-Douz et la fédération Tunisienne des vélos)

Lieu :Maison de la culture MOHAMED ELMARZOUGUI

- Deuxième journée de la joute poétique
- Exposition culturelle

Lieu : place de Souk

- Atelier d'informatique (animé par le club d'informatique de Kébili)
- Divers concours (animé par l'association animateurs sans frontière de kébili)
- Concours de meilleur habit pour enfants.

Programme de la session 46 du festival international du sahara du Douz

Mercredi le 25/12/2013

09h30 :

- Maison de culture **MOHAMED ELMARZOUGUI**.
- Spectacle théâtral

La première journée : Jeudi 26/12/2013

Lieu : place de Martyrs :

- Cérémonie d'accueil et d'ouverture animée par les troupes folkloriques et des arts populaires.

09h00 :

Lieu : maison de culture MOHAMED ELMARZOUGUI

- Coup d'envoi de la joute poétique : sujet « Poésie et nuit »

- Ouvertures des expositions : - photographie

- Art plastique
- herbes médicinales
- produits de centre de formation professionnelle le douz

Lieu : maison des jeunes Douz :

- Coup d'envoi de la campagne de sensibilisation pour la sécurité routière (encadré par le club de la culture outière, maison des jeunes de Douz)
- Coup d'envoi des expositions : - Art plastique (club arts et créations, maison des jeunes de Douz)

- Femmes artisanes (animé par club loisirs, maison des jeunes de Douz)

Lieu : Place de Souk :

- Atelier d'informatique et d'internet (club informatique de Kébili)
- Divers concours, jeux, jeux sans frontières (animé par l'association animateurs sans frontières de Kébili et d'unité d'animation des cités, Kébili)
- Tente : « voyage de partie unique » (encadré par l'association FAJR Essahra_Douz et le centre journée internationale

Lieu : Musée du Sahara_Douz :

- Jeux Folklorique (animée par l'association Tunisienne de jeux et sport antique en collaboration de fédération Tunisienne Sport pour tous)

Lieu la bibliothèque de Douz_Sud :

- Exposition permanente des éditions des écrivains de la région.

Lieu : Galerie 14 Janvier :

- Exposition de la résistance nationale : photos et documents

Lieu : siège comité du festival :

- Le croissant rouge de Douz organise une tente médicale (mesure de la pression artérielle et hyperglycémique et une tente de secourisme et 1er secours.
- Tente, exposition/documentaire

الصحراء والبادية

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الدورة
Session